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TRANSCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

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By the Editors

NATALIA KALOH VID, VLASTA KUČIŠ
editors

In a contemporary, multicultural world, health and sustainability depend less on technological innovation and more on the ability to understand. Transcultural communication moves beyond simple language translation; it represents a deep, reciprocal exchange of ideas. A healthy society is not merely one free from disease, but one where equality, trust, and mutual respect enable all voices to be heard. By fostering genuine transcultural dialogue, we build the resilience necessary to address global challenges—from pandemics to climate change—ensuring that no community is left behind in our pursuit of a sustainable future.

In an era defined by unprecedented global mobility, digital interaction, and complex humanitarian challenges, the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries has emerged as one of the most critical competencies of our time. Yet, as our societies grow increasingly diverse, the traditional model of multiculturalism—which often merely acknowledges the coexistence of different groups within a shared space—proves insufficient. What is required now is a shift toward transcultural communication: a dynamic, reciprocal process in which individuals and communities do not simply tolerate differences but actively engage with them, allowing for mutual transformation and the creation of shared meaning.

Unlike intercultural exchange, which often presupposes fixed cultural borders, transcultural communication recognizes that cultures are fluid, hybrid, and constantly evolving through interaction.

Ultimately, transcultural communication is not merely a soft skill or a diplomatic competence; it is a necessary strategy. It is the practice of recognizing common humanity without erasing the specificities that make each community unique.

The current book explores the theoretical foundations of transcultural communication in health and other domains, such as political sciences, sociology, and literature, examining its practical applications in health and environmental justice. The common theme running throughout the book is that the pursuit of a truly healthy and sustainable society is inseparable from the pursuit of mutual understanding based on a transcultural communication.

Transcultural communication gives us the most essential tool - the language to communicate, understand, involve, engage, and interpret.

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HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS: A MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF OBESITY-RELATED TERMINOLOGY IN HEALTHCARE AND EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

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This cross-national study examines how obesity-related terminology is perceived (*Fat*, *Adipose*, *Obese*, *Chubby*), as more acceptable or offensive, in healthcare and everyday communication contexts. The research was conducted among 1102 university students from four European countries, addressing four research questions. The study explores contextual differences, educational background (medical vs. non-medical students), and cultural variability of obesity-related terminology. The results show that medically grounded terms such as *Obese* and *Adipose* are consistently perceived as more acceptable and less offensive, particularly in healthcare settings. In contrast, colloquial terms such as *Fat* and *Chubby* are more frequently rated as offensive, especially in clinical contexts. Medical students demonstrate greater acceptance of professional terminology compared to non-medical students. Cross-national differences are evident, particularly for culturally sensitive terms such as *Adipose* and *Chubby*. Based on these findings, a matrix of terminology stability and cultural variability is developed, distinguishing universally stable terms from culturally dependent ones. Overall, the results emphasize the need for context-sensitive and culturally aware communication strategies in obesity-related discourse.

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1 Introduction

Obesity is one of the most pressing global public health challenges, affecting individuals across age groups, socioeconomic strata, and educational backgrounds. According to the World Health Organization (2025), adult obesity has more than doubled since 1990, while adolescent rates have quadrupled. Beyond biomedical consequences, obesity is associated with psychological distress, stigma, and social exclusion, all of which influence health-seeking behavior and treatment adherence.

Within this interdisciplinary landscape, communication occupies a central position. Discussions related to body weight and obesity belong to the realm of sensitive communication. Building an atmosphere of trust is essential, as numerous studies show that the outcome of such conversations often depends on the quality of the relationship between the individuals involved.

There are research studies on obesity as a public issue (Lafetá Pinto Santos et al., 2024), aiming to detect risk factors to create appropriate strategies and improve health outcomes (Safiri et al., 2024). Addressing this complex challenge requires an interdisciplinary approach, including communication challenges (Lindberg et al., 2023; Rippe, 1996). Consequently, obesity is to be addressed through an interdisciplinary framework integrating medical, psychological, sociological, and communicative perspectives.

Terminology plays a critical role in shaping interpersonal dynamics and relationships. Words used to describe obesity may be perceived as neutral, motivational, stigmatizing, or offensive. The selection of appropriate terminology may enhance understanding, preserve dignity, and strengthen trust in healthcare communication. Conversely, poorly chosen language may reinforce stigma, generate resistance, and impair health outcomes.

Although research has explored preferred terminology in clinical settings, important gaps remain. Few studies systematically compare perceptions across healthcare and everyday environments. Differences between medical and non-medical student populations are also underexamined, despite the potential influence of educational background on terminology perception. Furthermore, cross-cultural comparisons within student populations remain limited.

Given that weight gain affects approximately two-fifths of university students across four European countries (Baretić et al., in print), understanding how obesity-related language is perceived among young adults is particularly relevant.

The aim of this study is to examine how different obesity-related terms are perceived in terms of acceptability and offensiveness across healthcare and everyday contexts, and to explore differences according to educational background and cultural setting. This research is conducted within the framework of the Erasmus+ project “Inclusive social education fit for a healthy lifestyle: preventing obesity in young adults” (EDU-FIT), funded by the EU, which aims to promote inclusive social education and healthy lifestyle adoption among young adults.

The organization of this chapter is as follows: after the Introduction, the second section provides related work. The third section provides the research design, along with data set description and instrument presentation. The fourth section enumerates the results, including: i) cross-country overview of terminology perception ii) country-specific patterns iii) inferential analysis and testing of four research questions, with the final outcome presented in the form of a matrix of culturally specific and variable terminology. The last section concludes and offers suggestions for further research.

Based on the identified gaps, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: How are different obesity-related terms perceived in terms of acceptability and offensiveness in healthcare settings?

RQ2: How are the same terms perceived in everyday (non-clinical) environments?

RQ3: Do Medical students differ from Non-Medical students in their perception of obesity-related terminology?

RQ4: Are there differences in terminology perception among the four countries?

2 Related work

Sensitive communication refers to a respectful, thoughtful, and empathetic exchange of information—particularly on personal or emotionally charged topics—where the choice of words and tone plays a key role in promoting clarity, creating an atmosphere of trust, enabling effective information transfer and mutual understanding. In everyday life, this type of communication helps to build understanding, trust, and more inclusive social interactions—particularly when addressing issues such as body weight, health, or appearance.

In the context of obesity, the words we choose carry significant weight. They can affect how individuals perceive themselves, how others treat them, and how willing they are to engage in conversations about their health. Using appropriate, non-stigmatizing terminology not only encourages open and respectful dialogue, but also reduces discomfort and misunderstanding in everyday interactions. This is why sensitive communication, especially in the language used around obesity, plays a crucial role in both healthcare settings and in everyday life.

In healthcare, the primary aim of communication is to establish trust between healthcare professionals and patients. Research exploring the question "How to start a conversation about excess weight?" shows that even subtle changes in wording can significantly influence the treatment process (Speer & McPhillips, 2018).

Effective communication in medical settings supports a clearer understanding of the condition (Štifanić, 2013; Kumar & Chattu, 2018; Chamberlain-Salaun et al., 2013), promotes better long-term adaptation to illness, and increases treatment adherence (Swift et al., 2013; Richard et al., 2014). It also plays a key role in patient satisfaction and, ultimately, has a strong impact on treatment outcomes (Phelan et al., 2018; Gudzone et al., 2014).

Volger et al. (2012) argue that the choice of terms often depends on the individual, shaped by linguistic and cultural contexts. Studies in the United States indicate that people tend to prefer more neutral terms such as "weight" or "body mass index (BMI)" over more direct language like "obesity," "excess fat," or "fatness".

A similar pattern was observed in Australia, where respondents also favored "BMI" and "weight" over terms like "fatness" or "excess fat" (Swift et al., 2013). Schneiber et al. (2025) conducted research on 879 Danish adults with self-reported BMI \geq 30 to express preference for more "technical" or health-related terms (e.g. "weight", "Body mass index-BMI"), as opposed to vernacular terminology (e.g. "fatness"). Results show the preference for technical health-related terminology using people-first language, that creates non-stigmatizing conversation.

Terminology plays a significant role when searching for information and in communication. In their study, Seljan et al. (2014) analyze the use of professional and popular terminology in online diabetes resources and educational materials, emphasizing how terminology influences comprehension and accessibility of health information. Likewise, using appropriate terminology affects everyday communication, as investigated in a study by Baretić et al. (2022) involving 500 participants in Croatia—including patients, doctors, nutritionists, students of medicine, and students of social sciences, and humanities—reported consistent findings, where the term "fat" is perceived as pejorative by all groups, the term "adipose" is more accepted by doctors and students of medicine, the term "obese" is the most accepted by all groups, and the term "chubby" perceived as the most offensive.

Puhl (2020) analyzed 33 review papers on perceptions of and preferences for weight-related terminology, showing preference for neutral terminology (including "weight" or "unhealthy weight") over "obese" and "fat", which actually belong to professional and popular terminology, pointing out the need for culturally relevant weight-related terminology. Nutte et al. (2024) analyzed common social narratives, language, and images used to discuss body weight and identified key recommendations to reduce weight stigma, that include person-first language, individual language preferences and the use of non-stigmatizing language and imagery, among others.

The European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO, n.d.) launched the initiative "Language Matters: Obesity," which provides practical guidelines for healthcare professionals on how to communicate respectfully with individuals living with higher body weight. These guidelines recommend avoiding labels commonly used for other conditions (such as "diabetic," "hypertensive," or "allergy sufferer"). Instead, the use of person-first language is encouraged—saying, for example, "a

person with obesity” rather than “an obese person,” or “a person with an allergy” rather than “an allergy sufferer” (Kyle, 2014). This approach puts the person first and reflects respect and dignity in communication.

3 Research design

Our survey is publicly accessible via the official website of the Erasmus+ project EDU-FIT. The research was conducted as an anonymous, cross-sectional online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. No personally identifiable information was collected. The questionnaire did not request names, email addresses, or any other identifying data, thereby ensuring complete respondent anonymity. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed at the beginning of the survey about the purpose of the project, the anonymous approach, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequences. Informed consent was obtained prior to questionnaire completion and institutional ethical approval.

3.1 Dataset

Data were collected between November 2024 and January 2025. The questionnaire was accessible online throughout this period and could be completed at any time. The average completion time was approximately two minutes. The dataset consists of 1,102 valid responses collected from students in four countries participating in the EDU-FIT project, Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Table 1 presents the distribution of responses by country.

Table 1: Dataset size

	Croatia	Portugal	Slovakia	Slovenia
Total # of responses	394	325	175	208

Source: own

3.2 Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of 11 items organized into two sections. Section 1: Demographic and Academic Characteristics, collected demographic, anthropometric, and academic information. The variables included: Country of residence, Gender, Age, Height, Body mass, Field of study (technical sciences, biomedical sciences, biotechnical sciences, social sciences, humanities, or arts) and

Self-perception of body mass, assessed through a dichotomous (yes/no) statement: “I think I have an inadequate body mass.”

Section 2: Perception of Obesity-Related Terminology, was designed to assess the perceived acceptability of selected terms related in two distinct communicative contexts: healthcare and everyday environments. Four terms were evaluated: *Fat*, *Adipose*, *Obese*, and *Chubby*.

Each term was translated into the respective local language by professional linguists in collaboration with medical experts to ensure semantic accuracy and contextual appropriateness across countries. Participants were asked to evaluate how each term is perceived—specifically whether it was considered more as acceptable or more as offensive—in:

- A healthcare environment
- Everyday communication settings

Responses were measured using a six-point Likert scale, where higher values indicated stronger agreement with the presented evaluative statement. The scale was structured as follows: 6 – Completely agree, 5 – Mostly agree, 4 – Somewhat agree, 3 – Somewhat disagree, 2 – Mostly disagree, 1 – Strongly disagree.

The absence of a neutral midpoint was intentional, encouraging respondents to indicate directional perception rather than opting for neutrality.

4 Results

To examine the perceived acceptability of each term, responses were coded numerically according to the six-point Likert scale (1–6), where higher values indicated stronger agreement with the evaluative statement. This numerical transformation enabled quantitative analysis and comparison across terms and contexts.

The first part of the results includes a cross-country overview of terminology perception and an overview of country-specific patterns. In the second part, as an initial analytical step, descriptive statistics were calculated for each term across all countries. This approach allowed for the identification of overall perception trends

as well as potential country-level variations in terminology evaluation. In the next step the test of normality was conducted and four research questions were analyzed.

4.1 Cross-country overview of terminology perception

Figures 1 and 2 present the distribution of responses by country, and gender proportion of respondents, respectively. The sample includes 1,102 students from four participating countries: Croatia (n = 394), Portugal (n = 325), Slovakia (n = 175), and Slovenia (n = 208). The proportional distribution reflects relatively balanced participation, with Croatia contributing the largest share and Slovakia the smallest. The gender structure (Figure 2) shows the proportion of male and female respondents, providing context for subsequent perception analysis, as terminology sensitivity may be influenced by gender-related social norms.

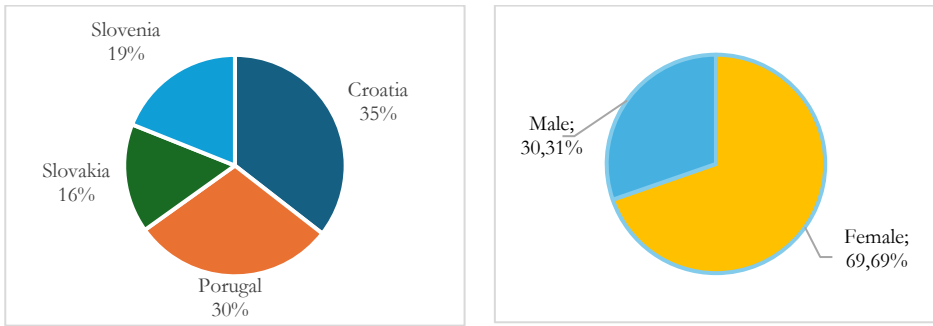


Figure 1: Percentage of responses per country Source: own. **Figure 2: Proportion of responses per gender** Source: own

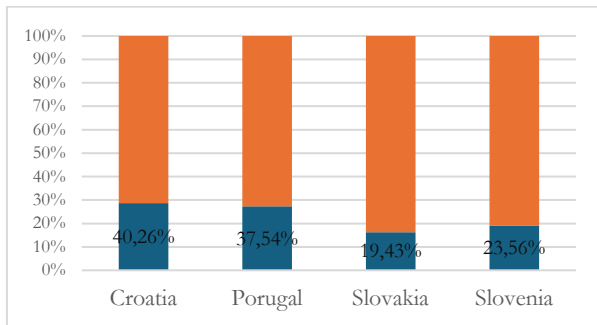


Figure 3: Average agreement with statement: "I think I have an unsuitable body mass." Source: own.

Figure 3 illustrates the average agreement with the statement: “I think I have an unsuitable body mass.” Agreement levels differ across countries. The highest proportion of agreement was observed in Croatia (40.26%), followed by Portugal (37.54%), while Slovakia recorded the lowest proportion (19.43%).

Figures 4 and 5 present the average perception of terminology considered as more acceptable in both healthcare environments (HE) and everyday environments (EE), across the four countries. Across all four countries, the terms *Obese* and *Adipose*, belonging to medical terminology, were consistently rated as the most acceptable. This pattern is more pronounced in the healthcare setting, where medically grounded terminology aligns with professional discourse norms and is likely perceived as more objective and less judgmental.

In everyday communication, *Obese* and *Adipose* remained the most acceptable compared to other terms, although their acceptability scores are slightly lower than in the healthcare context. This suggests that contextual framing influences linguistic tolerance: clinical terminology appears more appropriate within institutional medical settings than in informal interpersonal communication.

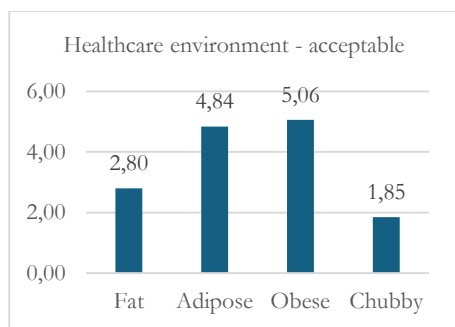


Figure 4: HE – acceptable

Source: own

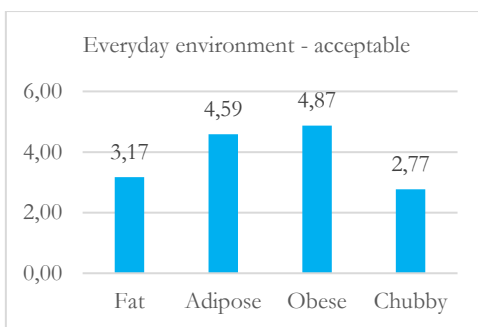


Figure 5: EE – acceptable.

Source: own

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the average perception of terminology considered as more offensive, again in both healthcare and everyday settings, across all four countries. In both contexts, the terms *Chubby* and *Fat*, informal and non-medical in nature, were rated as the most offensive. The offensiveness ratings are particularly elevated in the healthcare environment. This finding suggests that informal or colloquial

expressions may be perceived as inappropriate in professional medical settings, where neutrality and clinical precision are expected.

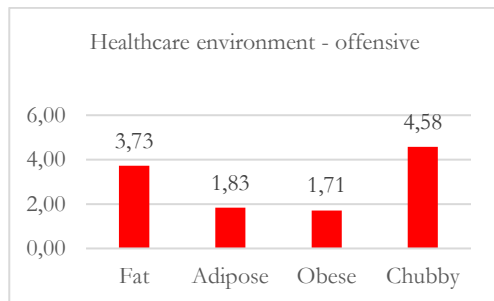


Figure 6: HE – offensive

Source: own

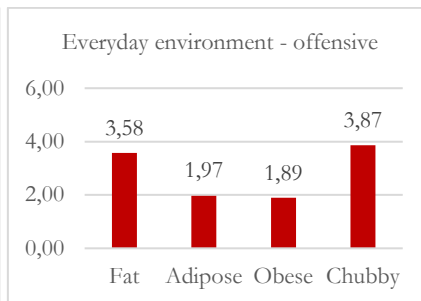


Figure 7: EE – offensive

Source: own

The contrast between medical (*Obese*, *Adipose*) and non-medical (*Fat*, *Chubby*) terminology indicates a clear linguistic differentiation in perceived legitimacy. While medical terms tend to be evaluated as more acceptable, colloquial descriptors carry stronger emotional connotations and may trigger perceptions of stigma or disrespect, especially when used in institutional healthcare contexts.

4.2 Country-specific patterns

Croatia

Figure 8 presents the percentage of students' affiliation, out of total 394 respondents, showing the largest proportion of students of biomedical sciences (54%), followed by social sciences (25%) and humanities (20%).

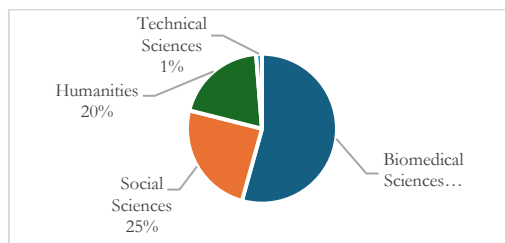


Figure 8: Percentage of students' affiliations for Croatia.

Source: own.

Figures 9 and 10 show the average perception of terminology perceived as acceptable in healthcare and everyday environments for Croatia. In both environments, on average, the terminology perceived as the most acceptable was the official terminology: *Obese* (cro. pretio) and *Adipose* (cro. adipozan). The average answers from Croatia are in line with the average answers across all four countries.

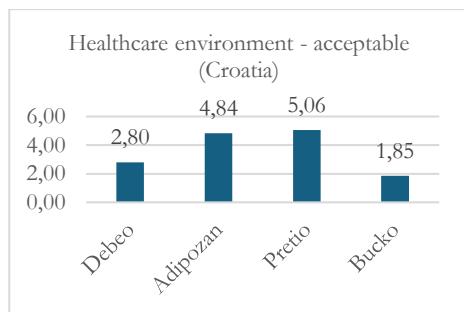


Figure 9: HE – acceptable, for Croatia

Source: own

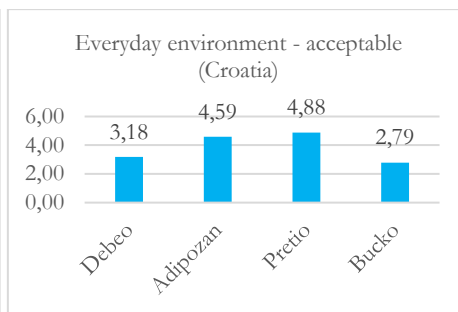


Figure 10: EE – acceptable, for Croatia

Source: own

Figures 11 and 12 show the average perception of terminology perceived as more offensive in healthcare and everyday environments for Croatia. In both environments, on average, the terminology perceived as the most offensive was unofficial terminology: *Chubby* (cro. bucko(a)) and *Fat* (cro. debeo(la)), even more in the healthcare environment. The average answers from Croatia are in line with the average answers across all four countries.

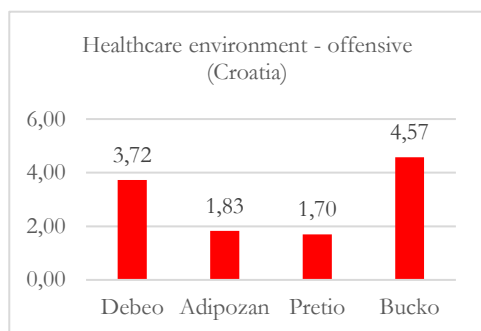


Figure 11: HE – offensive, for Croatia.

Source: own

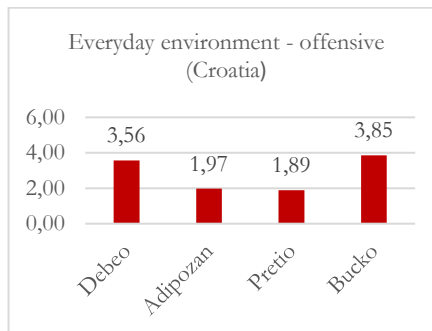


Figure 12: EE – offensive, for Croatia.

Source: own

Portugal

Figure 14 presents the percentage of students' affiliation, out of total 325 respondents, showing the largest proportion of students of social sciences (36%), followed by technical sciences (31%), then biomedical sciences (18%) and humanities (11%).

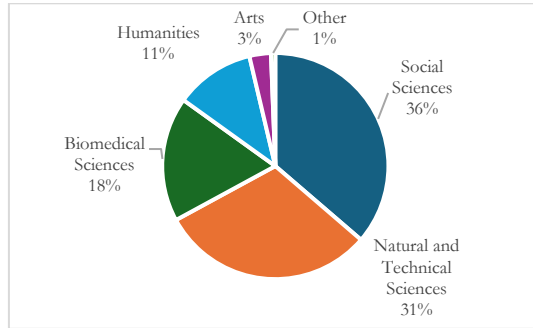


Figure 14: Percentage of students' affiliations for Portugal.

Source: own.

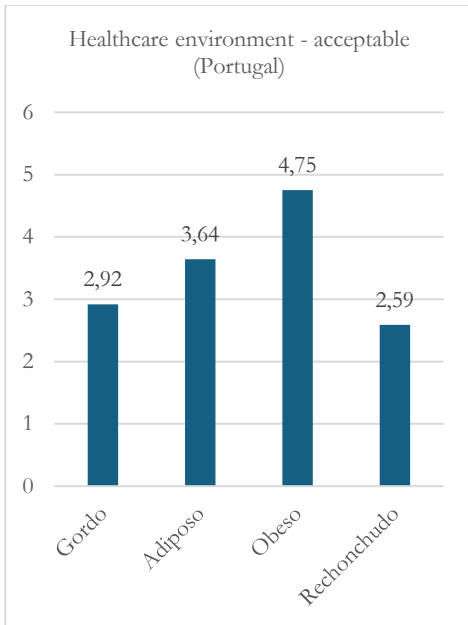


Figure 15: HE – acceptable, for Portugal.

Source: own

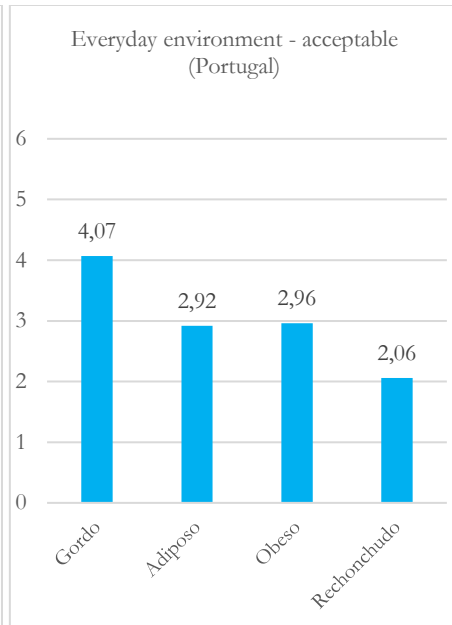


Figure 16: EE – acceptable, for Portugal.

Source: own

Figures 15 and 16 show the average perception of terminology perceived as acceptable in healthcare and everyday environments for Portugal. In the healthcare environment the most acceptable was the term *Obese* (por. obeso(a)), while the term *Adipose* (por. adiposo) was much less accepted, in contrast to average acceptance across all four countries. Interestingly, in the everyday environment, the term perceived as the most acceptable was *Fat* (por. gordo), which was perceived among the other three countries as the second most offensive term. In contrast to the average acceptance across all four countries, in everyday context, the terms *obeso* and *adiposo* are even less accepted than the term *Fat* (por. gordo).

Figures 17 and 18 show the average perception of perceived offensive terminology in the healthcare and everyday environment, for Portugal. In the healthcare environment, the term perceived as most offensive was *Chubby* (por. reconchudo(a)) followed by *Fat* (por. gordo(a)), as in average across four countries. In the everyday environment, the term perceived as the most offensive is the term *Fat* (por. gordo(a)). This shows the polarity for the term *Fat* (por. gordo(a)) which is perceived as the most acceptable and the most offensive in the everyday environment. Interestingly, perceived as the least offensive term in the everyday environment was the term *Chubby* (por. rechonchudo(a)), contrary to the average across all countries.

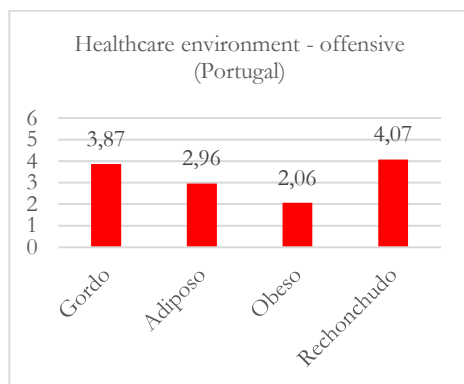


Figure 17: HE – offensive, for Portugal.
Source: own

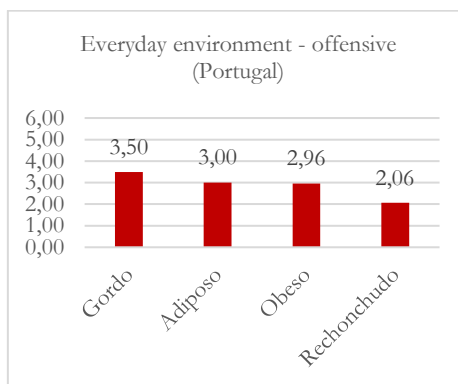


Figure 18: EE – offensive, for Portugal.
Source: own

Slovakia

Figure 19 presents the percentage of students' affiliation, out of total 175 respondents, showing the largest proportion of students of social sciences (73%), followed by humanities (19%) and technical and natural sciences (8%).

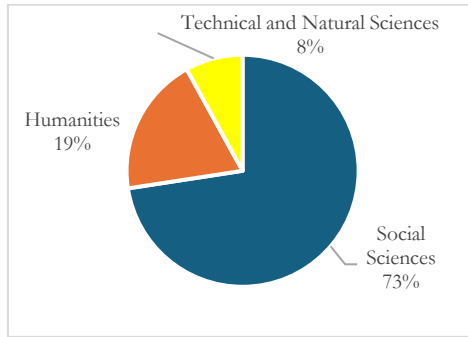


Figure 19: Percentage of students' affiliations for Slovakia.

Source: own.

Figures 20 and 21 show the average perception of terminology perceived as acceptable, in the healthcare and everyday environments, for Slovakia. In the healthcare and everyday environments, the most acceptable was the term *Obese* (slo. obézny(a)). Interestingly, the term *Adipose* (slo. tlstý) was much less accepted, contrary to average. Contrary to all other countries, the second term perceived as the most acceptable was the term *Chubby* (slo. bacuľatý(a)), in both environments.

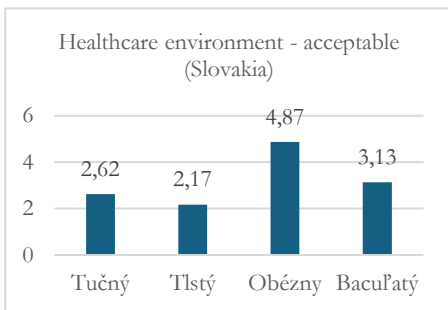


Figure 20: HE – acceptable, for Slovakia.

Source: own

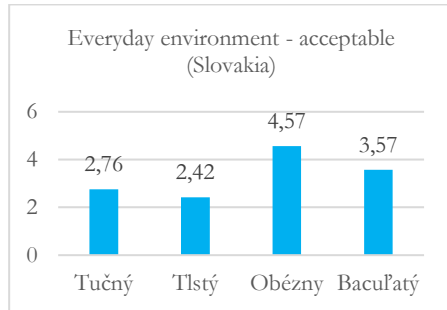


Figure 21: EE – acceptable, for Slovakia.

Source: own

Figures 22 and 23 show the average perception of perceived offensive terminology in the healthcare and everyday environments, for Slovakia. The terminology perceived as the most offensive differs from the average across four countries. Contrary to average results across all countries, the term perceived as the most offensive is *Adipose* (slo. tlstý) in both environments, followed by *Fat* (slo. tučný) and *Chubby* (slo. bacuľatý). The least offensive was the official term *Obese* (slo. obézny(a)), as in average across all four countries.

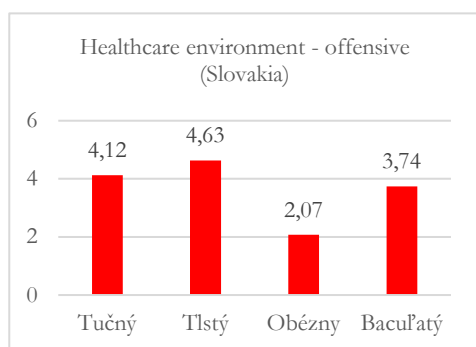


Figure 22: HE – offensive, for Slovakia.

Source: own

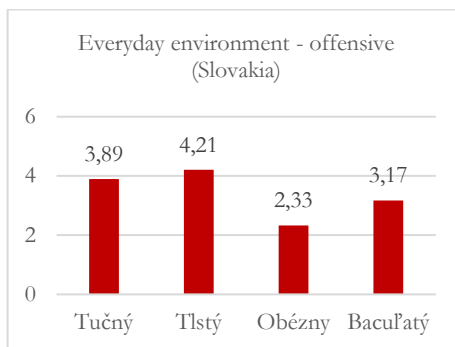


Figure 23: EE – offensive, for Slovakia.

Source: own

Slovenia

Figure 24 presents the percentage of students' affiliation, out of total 208 respondents, showing the largest proportion of students of biomedical sciences (50%), followed by social sciences (36%), humanities (12%) and technical and natural sciences (2%).

Figures 25 and 26 show the average perception of terminology perceived as acceptable, in the healthcare and everyday environments, for Slovenia. In the healthcare and everyday environments the most acceptable was the term *Adipose* (slv. adiposen(a)), as opposed to Slovakia, and not as in average across four countries, where the official term *Obese* was most accepted. The term *Obese* (slv. prekomerno težo) was perceived as much less acceptable than in average across all four countries.

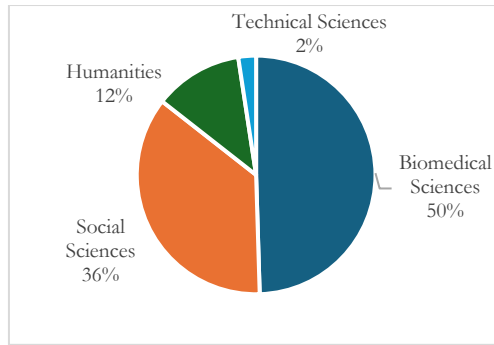


Figure 24: Percentage of students' affiliations for Slovenia.
Source: own.

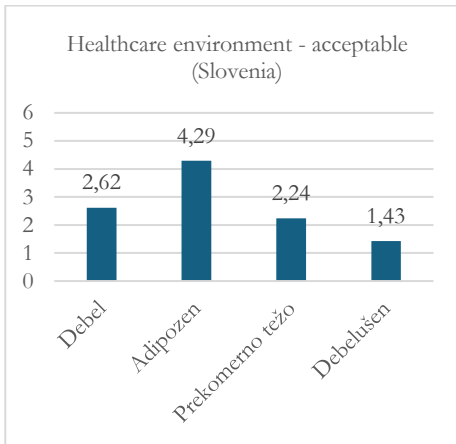


Figure 25: HE – acceptable, for Slovenia.
Source: own

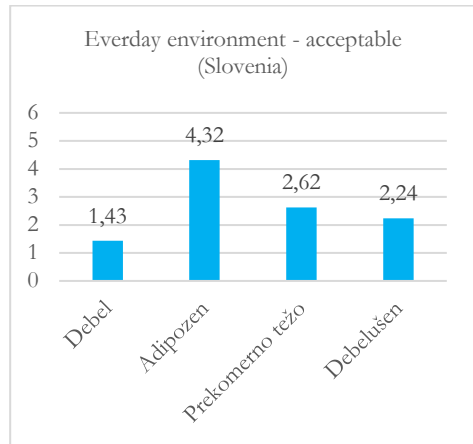


Figure 26: EE – acceptable, for Slovenia.
Source: own

Figures 27 and 28 show the average perception of perceived offensive terminology in the healthcare and everyday environment, for Slovenia. The terminology perceived as the most offensive was *Chubby* (slv. *debelušen*), followed by *Fat* (slv. *debeli*), as in average across all four countries. Interestingly, the official medical term *Obese* (slv. *prekomerno težo*) was perceived in everyday environment almost as offensive, as the term *Fat* (slv. *debeli*).

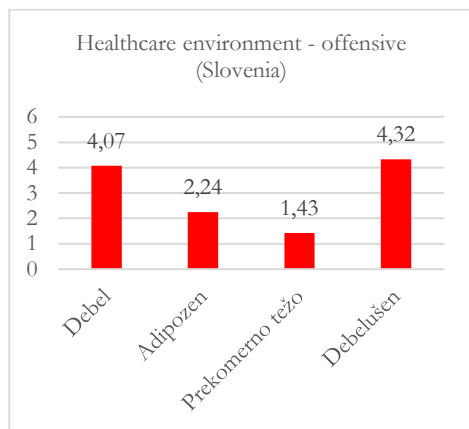


Figure 27: HE – offensive, for Slovenia.

Source: own

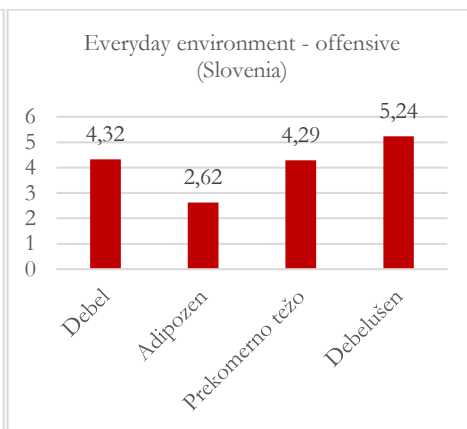


Figure 28: EE – offensive, for Slovenia.

Source: own

4.3 Inferential Analysis: Research Question Testing

The following section provides basic descriptive statistics and the analysis of four research questions.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d provides descriptive statistics of the dataset for each term separately.

Table 2a-d: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics – Health Offensive

	HO Fat	HO Adipose	HO Obese	HO Chubby
Median	4.000	2.000	1.000	5.000
Mean	3.896	2.685	1.819	4.249
95% CI Mean Upper	4.000	2.789	1.896	4.351
95% CI Mean Lower	3.791	2.581	1.741	4.146
Std. Deviation	1.770	1.754	1.314	1.736

Descriptive Statistics – Health Acceptable

	HA Fat	HA Adipose	HA Obese	HA Chubby
Median	2.000	4.000	6.000	2.000
Mean	2.773	3.958	5.006	2.365
95% CI Mean Upper	2.874	4.066	5.092	2.459
95% CI Mean Lower	2.672	3.850	4.920	2.271
Std. Deviation	1.710	1.824	1.456	1.589

Descriptive Statistics – Everyday Offensive

	EO Fat	EO Adipose	EO Obese	EO Chubby
Median	4.000	2.000	1.000	3.000
Mean	3.701	2.746	2.135	3.525
95% CI Mean Upper	3.808	2.849	2.226	3.631
95% CI Mean Lower	3.595	2.643	2.044	3.418
Std. Deviation	1.805	1.747	1.542	1.799

Descriptive Statistics – Everyday Acceptable

	EA Fat	EA Adipose	EA Obese	EA Chubby
Median	3.000	4.000	5.000	3.000
Mean	3.131	3.872	4.719	3.208
95% CI Mean Upper	3.234	3.979	4.813	3.313
95% CI Mean Lower	3.027	3.765	4.624	3.103
Std. Deviation	1.751	1.803	1.594	1.777

Source: own

Across all countries, descriptive statistics reveal a consistent pattern distinguishing medical from colloquial terminology. In healthcare settings, *Obese* shows the lowest offensiveness (M = 1.82; Median = 1) and the highest acceptability (M = 5.01; Median = 6), indicating strong professional legitimacy. *Adipose* is also perceived as relatively acceptable (M = 3.96) and less offensive (M = 2.69), though with greater variability (Std. Dev=1.75 and Std. Dev=1.82). In contrast, *Fat* (M_offensive = 3.90) and especially *Chubby* (M_offensive = 4.25; Median = 5) are rated as more offensive and less acceptable in healthcare contexts.

In everyday settings, perceptions are slightly less polarized but follow a similar trend: *Obese* remains the most acceptable term (M = 4.72), while *Fat* and *Chubby* receive offensiveness ratings. Overall, the results demonstrate a stable preference for medically grounded terminology and greater sensitivity toward informal expressions.

RQ1: Perception of Obesity-Related Terminology in Healthcare Settings

RQ1: How are different obesity-related terms perceived in terms of acceptability and offensiveness in healthcare settings?

Results show a clear distinction between medically grounded and informal/colloquial terminology. The terms *Obese* and *Adipose*, which belong to formal medical vocabulary, are consistently rated as the most acceptable and least offensive. Their higher acceptability scores indicate that respondents perceive clinically precise terminology as appropriate within professional medical discourse. The structured and diagnostic nature of these terms likely contributes to their perceived neutrality.

In contrast, the terms *Fat* and *Chubby*, which are colloquial and non-medical in character, receive substantially higher offensiveness ratings. These terms are evaluated as less acceptable in healthcare communication. The negative perception is particularly evaluated for *Chubby*, suggesting that informal or diminutive expression may contribute to non-understanding and ineffective results of communication.

RQ2: Perception of Obesity-Related Terminology in Everyday Settings

RQ2: How are the same terms perceived in everyday (non-clinical) environments?

In everyday communication contexts, terminology perception remains differentiated but is somewhat less polarized than in healthcare settings.

The terms *Obese* and *Adipose* continue to be rated as more acceptable than *Fat* and *Chubby*, although the strength of acceptability is slightly reduced compared to healthcare settings. This suggests that clinical terminology, while still viewed as most acceptable, may feel more formal or distant in informal social interactions.

The terms *Fat* and *Chubby* remain the most offensive in everyday environments. However, their offensiveness ratings are generally lower than in healthcare contexts. This indicates that informal language may be more tolerated in peer or family communication, although it still carries negative connotations.

RQ3: Differences Between Medical and Non-Medical Students

RQ3: Do Medical students differ from Non-Medical students in their perception of obesity-related terminology?

Table 3: Analysis between Medical and Non-Medical students

Term & Context	Mean (Medical)	Mean (Non - Medical)	U	p (Holm)	Effect size (r_rb)	Interpretation
Health – Offensive Fat	3.95	3.85	153998.5	n.s.	-0.029	No significant difference
Health – Acceptable Fat	2.73	2.81	144686.0	n.s.	0.032	No significant difference
Health – Offensive Adipose	3.00	2.44	178005.0	< .001	0.334	Medical students rate <i>Adipose</i> as less offensive
Health – Acceptable Adipose	4.67	3.58	—	< .001	-0.354	Medical students rate <i>Adipose</i> as more acceptable
Health – Offensive Obese	1.99	1.68	169227.0	< .001	0.156	Medical students rate <i>Obese</i> as less offensive
Health – Acceptable Obese	5.27	4.87	—	< .001	-0.173	Medical students rate <i>Obese</i> as more acceptable
Health – Offensive Chubby	4.23	4.26	148992.5	n.s.	-0.130	No significant difference
Health – Acceptable Chubby	2.00	2.56	—	< .001	0.196	Medical students rate <i>Chubby</i> as less acceptable
Everyday – Offensive Fat	3.64	3.73	—	n.s.	0.029	No significant difference
Everyday – Acceptable Fat	3.17	3.11	—	n.s.	-0.025	No significant difference
Everyday – Offensive Adipose	2.11	3.09	—	< .001	0.033	Medical students rate <i>Adipose</i> as less offensive
Everyday – Acceptable Adipose	4.51	3.54	—	< .001	-0.314	Medical students rate <i>Adipose</i> as more acceptable
Everyday – Offensive Obese	1.72	2.35	—	< .001	0.246	Medical students rate <i>Obese</i> as less offensive
Everyday – Acceptable Obese	5.08	4.53	—	< .001	-0.232	Medical students rate <i>Obese</i> as more acceptable
Everyday – Offensive Chubby	3.70	3.43	—	n.s.	-0.084	No significant difference
Everyday – Acceptable Chubby	3.01	3.31	—	n.s.	0.096	No significant difference

Source: own

To address the RQ3, which asked whether Medical and Non-Medical students differ in how their perception of obesity-related terminology, in terms of acceptability and

offensiveness, we conducted a Mann Whitney U test or a Wilcoxon test. Dependent variable was measured on a 6-point Likert scale, and data are ordinal and did not meet the assumptions of normality for any of terms, as confirmed by Shapiro–Wilk tests (all terms $p < .001$). The comparison included two independent groups – Medical and Non-Medical students. A Mann–Whitney U test, or the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, was conducted, since it did not assume normally distributed data and, instead, evaluated whether the distributions of ranks differed significantly between groups. This allowed us to test whether Medical and Non-Medical students varied in their perceptions of obesity-related terminology across healthcare and everyday contexts.

The results indicate that statistically significant differences between Medical and Non-Medical students were primarily observed for professional terminology (*Adipose* and *Obese*). Across both healthcare and everyday contexts, Medical students consistently rated these terms as more acceptable and less offensive compared to Non-Medical students. Effect sizes ranged from small to moderate, suggesting modest but systematic perceptual differences.

For colloquial terminology (*Fat* and *Chubby*), differences were generally small and not statistically significant after Holm correction. An exception was the term *Chubby* in the healthcare environment, where Medical students rated the term more offensive and less acceptable.

Overall, our findings suggest that educational background influences the perception of medically grounded terminology, with Medical students demonstrating greater acceptance of clinical vocabulary and greater sensitivity to non-official terminology, such as *Chubby*.

RQ4: Cultural differences in terminology perception among countries

RQ4: Are there differences in terminology perception among the four countries?

To address RQ4, which asked whether certain terms were consistently perceived as acceptable or offensive across cultures or whether their perception was culturally specific, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted. This nonparametric test was chosen as the ratings were in an ordinal (Likert) scale and not normally distributed,

making it suitable for comparing more than two independent groups—in this case, students from four countries. The Kruskal–Wallis test allowed us to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in perceptions of each term among four countries. Where significant differences were observed, Dunn’s post-hoc tests with Holm or Bonferroni correction was applied, to identify which specific country pairs differed. This approach enabled us to distinguish culturally stable terms (no significant cross-country differences) from culturally specific terms (significant variation across countries).

In the *healthcare setting*, students from all four countries showed a strong preference for professional clinical language. The term *Obese* was considered the most acceptable, with median around 6, across countries. This is the least offensive and the most acceptable term in Slovenia and Croatia.

Adipose also scored well, although perceptions varied: it was highly acceptable in Croatia and Slovenia, but far less so in Portugal and, specifically in Slovakia, where this term *Adipose* is considered highly offensive.

Table 4: Analysis for culturally-specific obesity-related terminology, among four countries

Term	Context	KW H (d=3)	p-value	Results	Interpretation
Fat	Health Offensive	8.787	*p<.05	*Croatia<Slovakia, Slovenia	This term is scored as offensive at average 4.0 on the scale 1-6. Generally there is no statistically significant difference, except at p<.05 where in Croatia the term is perceived less offensive than in Slovakia and Slovenia.
Adipose	Health Offensive	283.055	***p<.01	Statistically significant difference among all countries ***Slovakia>Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia ***Portugal>Croatia, Slovenia ***Croatia<Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia **Slovenia>Croatia	The term is considered to be the most offensive term in Slovakia, and the least offensive in Croatia, followed by Slovenia and then Portugal. In Slovenia it is considered as the most acceptable term.
Obese	Health Offensive	34.971	***p<.001, **p<.01	***Portugal, Slovakia>Slovenia **Portugal>Croatia	This is the least offensive term in average across all countries, however with statistical significance. It is the least offensive in Slovenia and Croatia, more in Slovakia and Portugal.
Chubby	Health Offensive	42.755	***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05	***Croatia>Slovakia, Portugal **Slovenia>Slovakia *Croatia>Slovenia	Chubby is statistically the most offensive term, perceived as the most most offensive in Croatia and Slovenia, than in Portugal and the least in Slovakia.

Term	Context	KW H (d=3)	p-value	Results	Interpretation
Adipose	Health Acceptable	265.770	***p<.001	Statistically significant difference among all countries ***Croatia>Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia ***Slovenia>Portugal, Slovakia ***Portugal>Slovakia	This term is the most accepted in Croatia, followed by Slovenia, and the least accepted in Slovakia, followed by Portugal, with statistically significant differences among all countries..
Obese	Health Acceptable	45.459	***p<.001	***Slovenia<Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia ***Slovakia>Slovenia *Croatia>Portugal	The term is the most accepted in Croatia, followed by Slovakia and Portugal, and significantly the least accepted in Slovenia.
Chubby	Health Acceptable	102.059	***p<.001	***Slovakia>Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal	The term has the highest acceptance in Slovakia and the lowest in Slovenia and Croatia, for which there is statistically significant difference.
Fat	Everyday Offensive	18.950	***p<.001, **p<.01	***Slovenia>Portugal, **Slovenia>Croatia	The term is considered to be the most offensive in Slovenia, the least in Portugal and Croatia, with statistically significant difference.
Adipose	Everyday Offensive	189.279	***p<.001, *p<.05	Statistically significant difference among all countries, except between Portugal and Slovenia ***Slovakia>Croatia, Portugal, Slovenia ***Croatia<Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia ***Portugal<Slovakia, ***Slovakia>Slovenia	The term is considered to be the most offensive in Slovakia, the least in Croatia, followed by Slovenia, with statistically significant difference among all countries.
Obese	Everyday Offensive	51.544	***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05	***Slovenia>Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia ***Croatia<Portugal ***Portugal<Slovenia **Slovakia>Slovenia	This is the least offensive term for Croatia, followed by Slovakia. In Slovenia it is perceived as highly offensive, with statistically significant difference.
Chubby	Everyday Offensive	44.082	***p<.001, **p<.01	***Slovenia>Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia **Slovakia<Slovenia	The term is the most offensive in Slovenia and Croatia, while less in Slovakia, and the last in Portugal, all with statistically significant difference.
Fat	Everyday Acceptable	24.608	***p<.001, **p<.01	***Portugal>Slovenia **Portugal>Slovakia	This term is statistically the most accepted in Portugal, and the least in Slovenia and Slovakia.
Adipose	Everyday Acceptable	172.960	***p<.001	Statistically significant difference among all countries ***Croatia>Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, ***Slovenia>Portugal, Slovakia ***Portugal>Slovakia	This term is the most accepted in Croatia, then Slovenia, and the least accepted in Slovakia, followed by Portugal. There is statistically significant difference among all countries.
Obese	Everyday Acceptable	47.941	***p<.001, **p<.01	***Croatia, Slovakia>Portugal **Portugal>Slovenia	The term is the most accepted in Croatia and Slovakia, and the least accepted in Slovenia, followed by Portugal. with statistically significant difference Slovenia, Croatia > Portugal, Slovenia>Slovakia
Chubby	Everyday Acceptable	52.206	***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05	***Croatia<Portugal, Slovakia, Portugal<Slovenia	The term has the highest acceptance in Slovakia, then in Croatia. There is statistically significant difference among Croatia<Portugal, Slovakia and Portugal>Slovenia.

Source: own

Fat and *Chubby* were consistently perceived as offensive and inappropriate in clinical interactions. The most stable term, which showed no difference in the healthcare environment, among countries was the term *Fat*, which was considered to be offensive in all countries. *Chubby* was the most offensive in Croatia and Slovenia, and the least in Slovakia.

This demonstrates that medicalized terminology is expected in healthcare, while in this environment casual or colloquial words carry a strong negative stigma. The term with highest positive stability in the healthcare environment is *Obese*, and with negative stability the term *Fat*. The term *Adipose* varies mostly across all countries (highly accepted in Croatia and the most acceptable in Slovenia), and highly offensive in Slovakia, contrary to other countries.

In *everyday environments*, perceptions are far more divided and culturally nuanced. *Obese* was considered the most acceptable, especially in Croatia and Slovenia. Terms *Chubby* and then *Fat* were widely perceived as the most offensive terms in daily conversation, however with differences among countries. These terms produced mixed reactions: in Slovenia it was regarded as the most offensive, while in Slovakia the term *Chubby* was seen as less offensive and highly acceptable, as the second most accepted term, sometimes even interpreted as a playful descriptor, in everyday environment.

In Portugal, the term *Fat* was perceived as the most acceptable and as second offensive term, which shows the polarity in everyday perception.

Adipose is the term that shows high cultural dependence, and variations among all countries: it is well accepted in Croatia, in Slovenia where it was the most accepted term, but strongly rejected in Slovakia, suggesting that scientific terms do not always transfer smoothly into common usage.

When comparing across settings, the *context* is clearly decisive. In healthcare, medicalized terms (*Obese* and *Adipose*) are favored, while casual labels (*Fat* and *Chubby*) are strongly rejected. In everyday life, however, there is no uniform rule: perceptions depend both on the term and on cultural background. Slovakia tends to view the term *Chubby* as more acceptable, while the term *Fat* in Portugal was seen both, as acceptable and offensive. In Slovakia there is the lowest acceptance of the

term *Adipose* and highest for *Chubby*. While Croatia and Slovenia often align, in Slovenia there is stronger rejection of the terms *Chubby* and *Fat*, and in everyday settings the term *Obese* is considered offensive, while the term *Adipose* is acceptable.

The overall tendency in ranking of terms would be as follows:

- In healthcare, *Obese* and *Adipose* are the most acceptable, while *Fat* and *Chubby* are the most offensive.
- In everyday contexts, *Obese* remains relatively acceptable, *Fat* is the most offensive, *Chubby* divides opinions, and *Adipose* is variably received.

Cultural variations

Terms with low cultural variations are used mainly in healthcare. *Obese* is broadly accepted across all countries as a clinical term, with only small differences. Even though Slovenia shows somewhat lower acceptance, it remains high overall. *Obese* is a cross-culturally stable medical term in healthcare. The term *Fat* is universally seen as offensive and inappropriate in clinical settings, with no major cultural exceptions.

In the healthcare setting, the term *Chubby* is perceived as inappropriate and offensive across all four countries. Unlike *Obese* and *Adipose*, which carry a clinical or scientific tone, *Chubby* is strongly associated with casual, colloquial language. Its use in a professional medical interaction can be seen as dismissive or disrespectful, because it trivializes a health-related condition and frames it in a non-serious, even mocking way.

While in everyday speech the term *Chubby* divides opinion – seen as a playful nickname in Slovakia but offensive in Slovenia and Croatia– in healthcare it loses any playful connotation. Across cultures, patients expect neutral, medicalized language in clinical encounters, which makes *Chubby* consistently rated as offensive and unacceptable in that environment.

Chubby is one of the most context-sensitive terms: in healthcare it is uniformly negative and inappropriate, but in everyday language it becomes culturally specific, swinging between affectionate and offensive depending on the country.

Terminology with high cultural variation:

Adipose (Everyday and Healthcare):

- Croatia and Slovenia show very high acceptance in both settings, while Slovakia shows low acceptance.
- Conclusion: *Adipose* is a culturally specific term, with strong acceptance in Croatia but rejection in Slovakia.

Chubby (Everyday):

- Croatia and Slovenia view it as offensive and less acceptable, while Slovakia sees it as more acceptable in everyday and healthcare context, and Portugal in healthcare context, even playful. This indicates cultural differences in term perception as affectionate or stigmatizing.
- Conclusion: *Chubby* is highly culturally specific in everyday language, polarizing between “harmless nickname” vs. “offensive label.”

Obese (Everyday):

- While acceptable overall (the highest level in Croatia), it is less accepted in Slovenia in both environments and in Portugal in everyday environment.
- Conclusion: *Obese* in everyday contexts has cultural variability, with Slovenia standing out.

Fat (Everyday and Healthcare):

- • Across all four countries, *Fat* is consistently perceived as offensive and less acceptable, particularly in healthcare settings.
- • In everyday communication, although slight differences in intensity exist, the term remains predominantly negatively evaluated in Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal, and Slovakia.
- Unlike *Adipose* and *Chubby*, *Fat* does not show strong cultural polarization; rather, it demonstrates relatively stable negative connotations across contexts.

- Conclusion: *Fat* is a culturally stable term with predominantly negative perception, especially in healthcare communication, where it is broadly regarded as inappropriate and stigmatizing.

According to results obtained from the initial analysis across countries and from the analysis, the following matrix of obesity-related terminology was created, with regard to cultural stability/ variability and perception as acceptable/ offensive.

Table 5. Matrix of terminology

Stability	Positive (Acceptable)	Negative (Offensive)
Stable across cultures	<i>Obese</i> – universally accepted in healthcare and relatively acceptable in everyday setting	<i>Fat</i> – consistently offensive in both healthcare and everyday settings
Variable across cultures	<i>Adipose</i> – term with the highest cultural variability. Acceptable in Croatia and Slovenia, considered offensive in Slovakia.	<i>Chubby</i> – very offensive in Croatia and Slovenia, acceptable in Portugal in everyday environment, and in Slovakia in healthcare and everyday environments.

Source: own

5 Conclusion

This study examined the perception of obesity-related terminology across healthcare and everyday contexts, considering educational background and cultural differences. The findings demonstrate that terminology perception is strongly context-dependent and shaped by both professional training and cultural environment. Medical terms such as *Obese* and *Adipose* are generally perceived as more acceptable, particularly in healthcare settings, whereas colloquial expressions such as *Fat* and *Chubby* are more frequently associated with offensiveness. Educational background influences the evaluation of clinical vocabulary, and cultural variability further moderates how certain terms are interpreted in everyday communication.

Overall, the results confirm that obesity-related terminology is not perceived uniformly. Instead, its interpretation depends on communicative context, professional socialization, and cultural background. These findings highlight the importance of context-sensitive and culturally aware communication strategies in preventive and healthcare-related discourse.

RQ1: How are different obesity-related terms perceived in terms of acceptability and offensiveness in healthcare settings?

In healthcare settings, medical terminology (*Obese*, *Adipose*) is perceived as the most acceptable and least offensive. Colloquial terms (*Fat*, *Chubby*) are rated as significantly more offensive and less appropriate. Clinical precision is expected in professional interactions, and informal expressions are viewed as inappropriate.

RQ2: How are the same terms perceived in everyday (non-clinical) environments?

In everyday settings, perceptions are less polarized but still differentiated. *Obese* remains relatively acceptable, while *Fat* and *Chubby* are generally perceived as more offensive. However, cultural nuances influence interpretation, and some terms (especially *Chubby*) may be viewed as either playful or stigmatizing depending on the country.

RQ3: Do medical students differ from non-medical students in their perception of obesity-related terminology?

Yes, differences are observed primarily for professional terminology. Medical students consistently rate *Obese* and *Adipose* as more acceptable and less offensive compared to Non-Medical students. Differences for colloquial terms are generally small and not statistically significant. Educational background appears to increase tolerance and perceived neutrality of clinical vocabulary.

RQ4: Are there differences in terminology perception among countries?

Yes, cultural differences are evident, particularly for terms such as *Adipose* and *Chubby*. While *Obese* shows relative cross-cultural stability in healthcare settings, *Adipose* demonstrates high variability across countries. *Chubby* is especially context- and culture-sensitive, being interpreted as either affectionate or offensive depending on national context.

These results confirm that both professional training and cultural background influence the perception of obesity-related terminology.

Key takeaway:

- In healthcare settings, professional terminology like *Obese* and *Adipose* is generally preferred, as it communicates the seriousness of the condition while minimizing discomfort, with a few exceptions. In Slovakia, *Adipose* is considered to be offensive.
- In everyday settings, cultural differences play a larger role. *Chubby* and *Fat* are the most offensive terms, with several exceptions. In Slovakia, *Chubby* is the second most accepted term. In Portugal, the term *Fat* is both widely accepted but also rejected, depending on the individual. In Slovenia, *Obese* is highly offensive term, while in Croatia it is the most accepted, along with *Adipose*. In Slovakia, the term *Adipose* is perceived as offensive.
- According to the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO, n.d.), it is recommended to use people-first language, such as a person with obesity, to show respect and reduce stigma.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample consisted exclusively of university students, which limits the generalizability of the results to broader age groups and non-academic populations. Second, the study relied on self-reported perceptions measured through a six-point Likert scale, which may not fully capture the complexity of emotional reactions to terminology. Third, the cross-sectional perceptions did not include change over time. Additionally, although the study included four European countries, cultural comparisons may not reflect perceptions in non-European or more diverse environments. Finally, translation of terms into local languages, despite professional verification, may carry subtle semantic differences influencing responses.

Future research should expand to more diverse populations, including older adults and non-student groups, and incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews or discourse analysis to better understand contextual meaning. Longitudinal designs could explore whether educational interventions influence terminology perception over time. Further cross-cultural studies beyond Europe would strengthen understanding of global variability in obesity-related language.

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PILOTING A NEW COURSE FOR DEVELOPING HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HABITS AMONG STUDENTS

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According to the online surveys conducted in the first part of the Erasmus + international project EDU-FIT: INCLUSIVE SOCIAL EDUCATION FIT FOR HEALTHY LIFE-STYLE - PREVENTING OBESITY IN YOUNG ADULTS, almost 80% of 1533 students from Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia and Norway stated they did not have any curricula on developing healthy lifestyle habits or preventing obesity and overweight. These findings signify a problem within higher education systems which often ignore the importance of offering the students sustainable methods and practices on how to live healthier. The research focuses on designing, piloting and implementation of a curriculum for a new elective course *Zdrav način življenja v univerzitetnem okolju/Healthy lifestyle habits in the university environment* which will be offered at the University of Maribor. The research question is: How to design an effective university skills training to influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to healthy lifestyle choices and preventing obesity? This study employs piloting of the new curriculum in the classroom, online surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth partly structured interviews. Participants include students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and study fields. Preliminary results indicate a positive correlation between the integrated educational intervention and improved knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to healthy lifestyle choices.

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1 Introduction

Considering that obesity has been associated with serious outcomes such as high morbidity, mortality, and impact on quality of life, educating the younger generation (students) about the problems of obesity, raising awareness of obesity, encouraging them to live a healthier life and increasing motivation for healthy eating and undertaking physical activities are of crucial importance. Poor diet and physical inactivity directly affect life expectancy and quality for millions of citizens as well as the efficiency and sustainability of health systems. Up to 7% of EU health budgets are spent yearly on diseases linked to obesity. Additional costs result from loss of productivity due to health problems and premature death (2.8 million deaths per year from causes associated with overweight and obesity).

This chapter is based on our experience within the EDU-FIT project with a successful pilot project of a new, innovative curriculum aimed at preventing obesity and developing healthy lifestyle habits at the University of Maribor in an elective course entitled *Edu-Fit: Zdrav način življenja v univerzitetnem okolju/ Edu-Fit: Healthy lifestyle habits in the university environment*. The main objective of the course is to create, inform, and disseminate sustainable, permanent policies and methods to tackle obesity among young adults within educational institutions and to help this target group to develop a healthy lifestyle and eating habits. An important part of the project is the development of guidelines for providing students with knowledge about the importance of developing communication skills that encourage sensitive, inclusive, and empathetic, not offensive or mocking, communication within the student community on the issue of obesity (Hoffmann, Dunder and Seljan, 2024).

One hundred twenty-two students of both genders took part in the implementation phase. The empirical part of this study focuses on the analysis of students' self-reflection diaries and surveys which were filled in during the pilot phase from February to April (2025) at the University of Maribor. Based on the results of this analysis, we modified and adapted the curriculum. The purpose of self-reflective diaries was not to monitor or follow students' weight loss but to discover and examine their opinions and reflections on developing healthier lifestyle habits: (1) evaluating body mass, (2) the ability to count calories, developing healthier eating habits by using healthy recipes, number and times of meals, (3) the importance of appropriate, sensitive and non-offensive communication, (4) simple physical

exercises and everyday challenges, including motivation, (5) self-reflecting on improving stress-reducing skills by using meditation and other calming techniques. The results were evaluated on the basis of anonymous Google form surveys.

2 Implementation of a new curriculum at the University of Maribor

The course is thirty hours long and will be held in Slovene. It will be offered as an elective extra-curricular activity with 3 ECTS to all students at seventeen faculties University of Maribor in the academic year 2026/27. The most significant goal is to encourage students to develop healthy lifestyle habits, such as a balanced diet and increased physical activity, and to help them develop sensitive communication skills in the field of obesity. Another objective is to familiarize students with scientific data regarding obesity, the consequences of obesity, and techniques to prevent the development of obesity.

The course includes three thematic areas. The first focuses on obesity as a disease, as students need to understand the causes of obesity and the factors that influence its development. In this part students learn about obesity from a valorisation perspective and gain knowledge about obesity and what obesity means, how it is assessed, and how body weight is classified. They also learn about common methods used to assess obesity, such as body mass index (BMI), and the incidence of obesity and the causes of obesity, as well as factors that lead to obesity, including unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical activity, and the influence of family and environment. In addition, students are familiarized with nutritional intake in terms of individual nutrient groups and energy intake, and acute and chronic health problems associated with obesity, such as heart disease, diabetes, joint problems, and others. Finally, during this stage, students develop communication skills and learn about appropriate terminology and sensitive communication about obesity.

The next part focuses on nutrition and helps students to gain knowledge about basic nutritional data and information and to understand what macro- and micronutrients, vitamins and minerals are. Students learn about the development of food production through history, farming, and sustainable food production, and recent trends in food supply. They also gain insight into food marketing strategies, including the reading of food labels and food packaging, and learn about the concept of my Healthy plate and how to use it. This part also presents scientific concepts of a healthy diet, which

guide students to analysis and solving various problems, and help them to develop the ability to search, select, and use relevant data and information in the field of nutrition for implementation in the students' environment and every-day life. Awareness of food choice's impact on climate change is also included in the expected competences which students will develop.

The final part focuses on physical exercise and introduces students to the meaning of exercise – exploring body and muscle movement, how to calculate energy needs and basal metabolism, and to basic types of exercise for maintaining physical condition and performance. Students learn about optimal training methods for endurance and strength and gain knowledge of how exercise can prevent and treat diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. It is crucial that students are able to recognize physical activity as a key factor of a healthy life and also to recognize stress as one of the causes of obesity.

Intended learning outcomes are the following:

- Students know basics effects of food and healthy diet on body processes;
- Students understand causes of obesity and the factors that influence its development;
- Students understand the importance of exercise;
- Students understand principles of sensitive communication;
- Students understand how to use mindfulness techniques to reduce stress in everyday life.

Learning and teaching methods include: (1) lectures, (2) seminars, (3) case studies, (4) using social media to promote healthy life-style, (5) ueaching and learning through the didactic use of ICT.

3 Self-reflective diaries

In the implementation phase we used self-reflective diaries, which are commonly used in various teaching fields and scientific disciplines, to verify how well students are aware about the importance of developing healthy lifestyle habits, if they include these habits in their everyday routine and which options they have within a university

environment (including access to the exercise area, healthy food options, a special course on the dangers of obesity, etc). Self-reflective diaries were chosen as a useful and relatively easily applicable didactic tool. Students are often asked to write a reflective journal or to use other forms of decision reporting (such as think-aloud protocols) to answer questions about their “thinking and decision-making process,” including difficulties encountered, solutions, and options considered. The students were given the logs during the pilot stage, which allowed them to gain a better understanding of the learning and knowledge they acquired during the process (cf. Jarvis 2001).

The aspect of self-development was not included in this phase, as the students did not have an opportunity to go back and review if they had lost weight or improved their lifestyle habits, as the pilot period lasted only three months. Once the curriculum is accredited at the University of Maribor, we intend to ask students to keep self-reflective logs for the whole semester, so they can monitor and review their experience, follow their own progress developing healthier lifestyle habits, and perhaps “find a better approach for the next time they encounter similar issues” (Moon 1999: 191). The purpose of self-reflective diaries is not to monitor or follow students’ weight loss, as is suggested in Pacanowski’s and Levitsky’s (2020) “Self-Weighing and Visual Feedback Facilitates Self-Directed Learning in Adults Who Are Overweight and Obese,” but only to ask for their opinions and reflections on having and developing healthy lifestyle habits, such as eating habits (cooking more healthy meals by themselves, the ability to count calories and evaluate the meals), physical exercise habits (small physical challenges every day, such as using stairs instead of the elevators, walking or cycling instead of taking a bus, stretching regularly), looking for professional sources of information online, etc. Similar research was conducted by Chen et. al. (2017) “Borrowing Happiness from the Future”: Exploring College Students’ Own Experiences on Health-Related Lifestyles.” Chen et al combined the theory of emerging adulthood with self-authorship and utilized students’ reflection papers ($n = 111$) to explore their current lifestyles and reasons behind behavioural changes and concluded that

Decreased physical activity, increased substance use, irregular sleep patterns, and unhealthy dietary habits emerged after students transitioned to college. These shifts reflect the complex interplay among changes in living environment and interpersonal

relationships, time and finance allocation, and interrelated behaviours (Chen et. al. 2017, 113–114).

Other studies in the field of evaluating students' reflections on developing healthy lifestyle habits include Coxey (2018); Brown et. al. (2014); Jaffe et. al. (2022), and Gala (2023). The use of self-reflection makes assessment a part of the learning process, not an imposed evaluation of a student's final product, particularly when it is related to personal goal setting. Our study provides practical examples of teacher reflection prompts and reviews the quality of self-reflection activities that lead to maximum success. These qualities include self-reflection as a guided, repeated, sincere, and nonjudgemental activity in the form of conversations between teachers and students (Giguere 2012: 100).

The logs contained precise questions, occasionally requiring descriptive answers as well as room for reactions and comments. The questions were constructed in a way that made students feel comfortable and not judged or evaluated. We structured the diaries to ensure that the students did not just recount events or activities but employed critical thinking about their experience by “focusing on thinking about their practices,” as suggested by Hatton and Smith (1995: 35).

Another common problem surrounding the use of logs is related to the students' uncertainty and frustration around what to write in the logs and how to use them. To avoid this frustration, we distributed the observation logs in advance and presented the students with a way to structure their observations, emphasizing what they should try to focus on. We tried to avoid overloading the students with instructions to leave space for spontaneous and personal reflection.

We did not assess the logs, though in some cases, students' reflective journals are assessed and can influence a student's grades or marks for a particular course, as suggested by Chabon and Lee-Wilkerson (2006). The assessment was not a part of the pilot phase. In future, we intend to follow Boud and Knight's (1996) suggestion that instead of giving grades or marks, teachers can evaluate the journals as “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” to minimise the tension between reflection and assessment. In this way, teachers can check whether the students described the event or the process without “making any attempt to overthink it and a necessity to learn from the experience” (Lee 2005: 47).

It was also impossible to evaluate whether some students tried to please us, the teachers, by producing what we believe to be the most appropriate journal. This issue was discussed by Boud and Knights (1996), who emphasized that students may try to please the teachers by producing a journal which they think the teacher would like. In our case, this issue was irrelevant, as the logs were not graded and we firmly believe the students focused exclusively on their experience (partly qtd. in Kučić & Kaloh Vid 2025: 62-63)

4 Methodology

4.1. Purposes and goals

One hundred twenty-two students were involved in the pilot stage. To collect data for our analysis, we used self-reflective logs, which seemed to be the best method of summarizing the students' experience. The logs were developed and prepared by the *Edu-Fit* project team in the second work stream, which was coordinated by the KBC-Zagreb. Students were given self-reflective logs and completed them immediately after the presentation of the curriculum. The logs were structured as following: 1. Gender; Age (years); 2. Height (in centimetres); 3. Weight (in kilograms); 4. Year of Study; 5. Area of Study: Business (accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing); Humanities (art, history, languages, literature, music, philosophy, religion, theatre); Natural and applied sciences (biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics, medicine); Social sciences (anthropology, education, geography, law, political science, psychology, sociology); 6. Have you experienced any weight change during your study?: (a) Weight loss; (b) Maintained the same weight; (c) Gained less than 5 kg; (d) Gained 5-10 kg; (e) Gained more than 10 kg; (7) What is the primary reason for your weight change? Think about it and try to reflect upon any changes in weight you experienced. What may the causes be? (a) Stress; (b) Unhealthy eating habits; (c) Lack of physical activity; (d) Other (please specify); (8) Do you have access to a university cafeteria (cantina)? - Yes - No; (9) How often per week do you eat in the cantina? - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more; (10) How often per week do you cook? - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more; (11) How often per week do you order take-away food? - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more; (12) Do you have access to a place for exercising at the university? - Yes - No; (13) How often per week do you exercise? - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more; (14) Are you aware that food choices can affect climate change?

Explain why do you think so; (15) Where do you primarily get information regarding a healthy lifestyle? (Select all that apply) Explain why is this a particular source of the information for you? What attracts your attention most? Do you think that this source/sources are sufficient? (a) Parents; (b) Friends; (c) Physician; (d) University; (e) Webpages and portals (which one); (f) Social media (which one); (16) Do you have any course in your university program which focuses on developing healthy life-style habits? - Yes -No; (17) Would you choose the course *Edu-Fit: Healthy lifestyle habits at the university* if you had this possibility? -Yes – No; (18): Do you think that such a course will help you to prevent obesity and develop healthy lifestyle habits? If so, please, explain how and in which way; (19) Which part of the curriculum did you find most interesting and informative? (a) Nutrition; (b) Physical exercise; (c) Obesity (causes and diagnosis); (d) All parts; (20) Sensitive communication and most appropriate vs. most offensive term in the field of obesity.

4.2 Participants

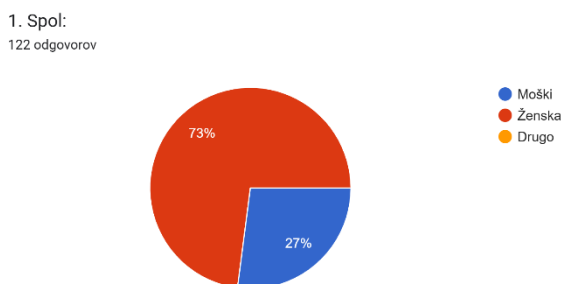
One hundred and twenty-two students took part in the pilot phase, 73% females and 27% males. The observation logs were in Slovene and were provided on a voluntary basis for the purpose of this study. They did not contain information about each student's personal profile, such as age, gender or nationality, but included only their student numbers. Each participant was given an observation log in advance and was asked to fill it in as soon as possible after the activity. In case of observation activities, students began completing part of the logs during the activity.

Questions did not require Likert scale answers (with a 1 to 5 range, from 'I completely disagree' to 'I completely agree') but provided the opportunity for students to provide more detailed answers. After a general introductory question about the location and the case, the questions that followed were structured chronologically and addressed issues arising during the students' experience.

Mixed methods were used to analyse the results: a quantitative method could not be applied, as the questionnaires did not include closed questions that restricted the respondent's answers. Subsequently, a qualitative method was used to analyse and categorise the answers to the open-ended questions as well as the remarks, comments and observations made by the respondents, such as those entered in the "other" category.

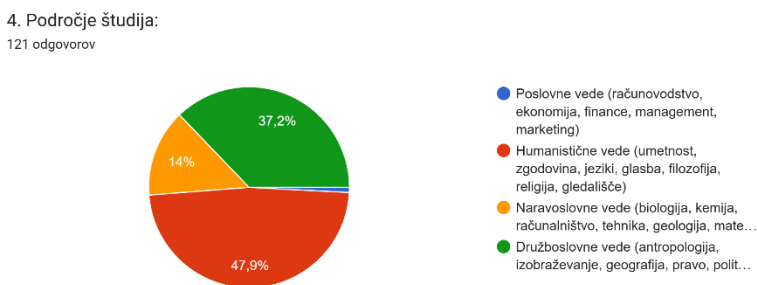
4.3 Students' responses

It is impossible to present all results of the observation logs in this study, so we decided to focus on a few key questions and responses. 73% of the participating student were female and 27 % male.



Graph 1: gender

Students were from the humanities (47.9%), social sciences (37.2%) and natural sciences (14%).



Graph 2: study area

In our questions, we turned our attention to information access, particularly regarding environmental awareness. Reflecting the growing concern for sustainability, students were asked if they were aware that food choices could influence climate change. A significant majority of 72% demonstrated awareness of this connection. This indicates a promising level of environmental consciousness among students, highlighting a growing understanding of the impact of food production and consumption on climate change.

We inquired about the primary sources from which students obtain information regarding a healthy lifestyle, allowing for multiple selections. The reliability and credibility of these sources are of great importance. The answers revealed that social media (74,36%), webpages, and online portals (72,56%) are the predominant sources for such information. However, these platforms are often fraught with unreliable or misleading content, influenced by commercial interests. In contrast, traditional sources such as physicians (26,26%) and universities (14,54%), which typically provide evidence-based and trustworthy information, scored lower in terms of being utilized by students. This discrepancy highlights the need for greater efforts to promote reliable sources of information regarding healthy lifestyles, ensuring that students have access to accurate and scientifically sound guidance. By enhancing awareness of credible sources and encouraging critical thinking skills, universities can empower students to make informed decisions that positively impact their well-being.

Participants were asked whether they had experienced any changes in weight during their studies. Approximately 65% of students reported either experiencing weight loss or maintaining their weight, 24% disclosed gaining less than 5 kg, 13% reported a weight gain between 5 to 10 kg, and 4% reported gaining more than 10 kg. This statistic is cause for concern, considering that a significant proportion of students are in their first two years of study. It raises the prospect that if those nearing the end of their studies were surveyed, the statistics regarding weight gain could be even higher.

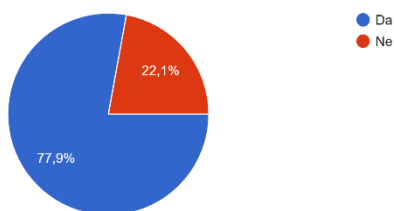
The subsequent questions delved into identifying the primary reasons behind students' weight changes. 33% of respondents attributed their weight fluctuations to stress, indicating a significant risk factor impacting both mental and physical well-being. Fewer than 20% believed that unhealthy eating habits and a lack of physical activity were contributing factors. This sheds light on the pervasive influence of stress on students' health, underscoring the need for interventions aimed at managing stress levels and fostering resilience.

67% of students acknowledged that they have the access to exercise facilities but only 21% exercise more than three times a week. 80% confirmed that they have access to the university canteen or cafeteria but nearly 50% revealed that they eat there only once a week, suggesting the use of other sources of food (take-away,

ordered, etc.). Only 27% of students cook five times or more per week, while 23% acknowledged that they cook once a week or less. This indicates that for many students, the cafeteria does not serve as the primary source of sustenance throughout the week.

In our final question, we sought insights into potential areas for improvement within university programs. We asked students if their curriculum included any courses focused on developing healthy lifestyle habits. Nearly 80% of respondents indicated the absence of such courses in their university programs. During the pilot phase, 77.9% of students responded that they would choose the course *Edu-Fit: Healthy lifestyle habits at the university* if it was offered on a regular basis at the University of Maribor.

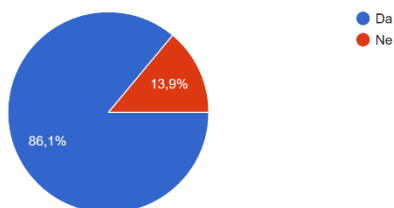
5. Ali bi izbrali predmet EDU-FIT: Zdrav način življenja v univerzitetnem okolju, če bi bil ta na voljo?
122 odgovorov



Graph 3: Will you choose a new elective course?

86.1% responded that the course would help them to improve their eating and exercising habits.

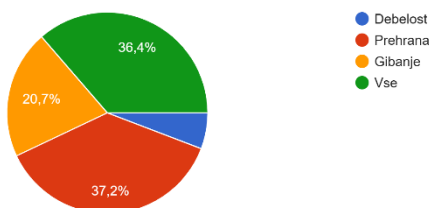
6. Ali menite, da bi vam ta predmet pomagal, da izboljšate svoje prehranjevalne in gibalne navade?
122 odgovorov



Graph 4: Do you think the course will help you to improve your eating habits?

We found it interesting that 37.2% of students considered the part of the curriculum devoted to eating habits most interesting, while the part devoted to understanding of the causes of obesity was interesting merely to 7.7%. 20.7% responded that they considered the part on developing daily exercising habits most important and 36.4% considered all parts of the curriculum equally interesting.

7. Kateri del učnega načrta se vam je zdel najbolj zanimiv in koristen?
121 odgovorov



Graph 5: Which part of the curriculum do you find most interesting and useful?

During the preparation phase, before the activities, students were asked if they had any set routine for self-reflection or if they had any experience with reflecting. None of the students reported having a formal routine to reflect on developing healthy lifestyle habits and none acknowledged having had any experience with guided self-assessment before.

Students found the possibility to reflect and evaluate their healthy life-style habits challenging but important. The preparation phase helped to explain what the students were expected to reflect upon and why all questions were of equal importance. The curriculum was introduced in all details, accompanied by a digital, interactive *Handbook* on the importance of preventing obesity and developing healthy lifestyles habits, which was developed by the partners from the KBC - Zagreb in the second working phase of the project. *The Handbook* is equipped with pictures, tables with pictures of physical exercises and also with QR codes to short videos on how to prepare healthy meals and to interviews of young people/students who successfully lost weight. The students evaluated this source as particularly useful, as most of them use social medias for information on the dangers of obesity and the importance of developing healthy life-style habits.

Students emphasised that this was their first time they were addressed directly on the importance of developing healthy lifestyle habits while studying at university and that they found it inspiring and useful as they could reflect on how their lifestyle changed since they began to study.

The students also emphasised that they had little or no knowledge about the importance of nutrition and preparation of healthy meals but mostly relied on pre-ordered food or university canteens. 80% confirmed they had access to university canteens, but the survey did not include the evaluation of prepared meals served in the canteens (partly qtd. in Kučič & Kaloh Vid 2025: 65-69).¹

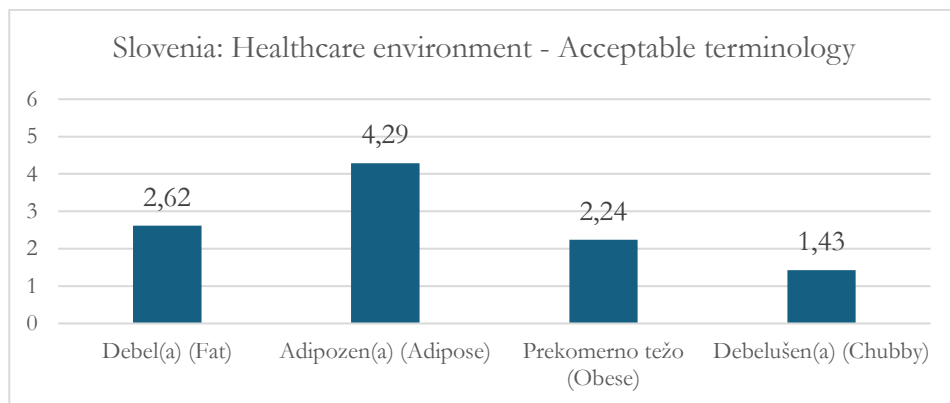
5 Transcultural communication

One part of the curriculum is dedicated to the importance of sensitive and appropriate intercultural communication regarding obesity. In the context of transcultural communication, Žagar-Šoštaric and Badurina Filipin (2025: 165) state that “Professional translators, and especially specialized translators, are trained not only in the language, but also various fields of linguistics, and—particularly important nowadays—in a specific area of expertise.” The students were offered several terms which related to “being over-weight” and they were surprised that various terms and expressions can be used when communicating about obesity, such as: “Debel” (fat), “adipozen(a)” (adipose), “oseba s prekomerno težo” (obese person) and “debelušen (a)” (chubby). They found discussion of the meaning of various expressions useful, and they were asked to choose those terms which seem most acceptable and non-offensive/non-mocking to them in a healthcare environment and in an everyday environment.

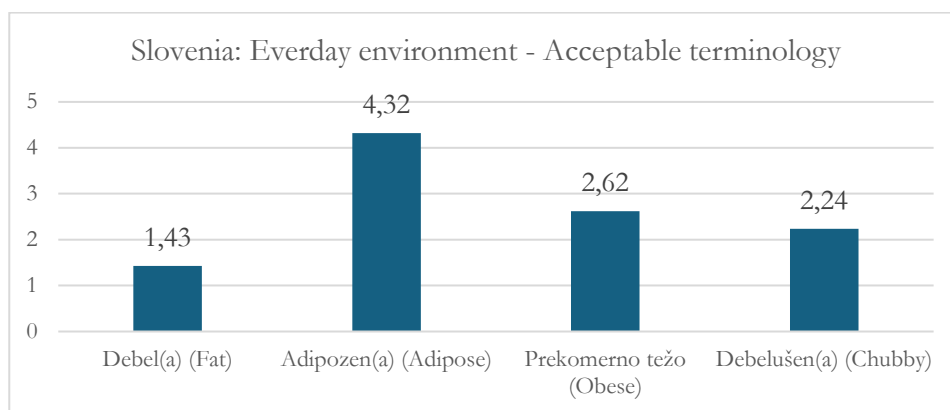
The following table shows the mean values for perceived acceptable terminology in the healthcare and everyday environment. The term “adipose” was accepted by most students as “non-offensive” and “neutral”. They explained their choice by stating

¹ Considering the importance of the food quality served in the university canteens, partners of the EDU-FIT project also developed and implemented short tips for the cook staff in university canteens on how to prepare healthy meals. The posters were translated into five partner languages (English, Slovene, Croatian, Slovak, Slovene and Norwegian) and implemented in the university canteens of partners universities. Posters have four simple recommendations, take a maximum of one minute to read, avoid having too much text and have a QR code to the project’s website (Erasmus+ EDU-FIT Project. <https://sites.google.com/g.uporto.pt/edu-fit>).

that they were not so familiar with this term and it sounded “professional” and “medical” to them.

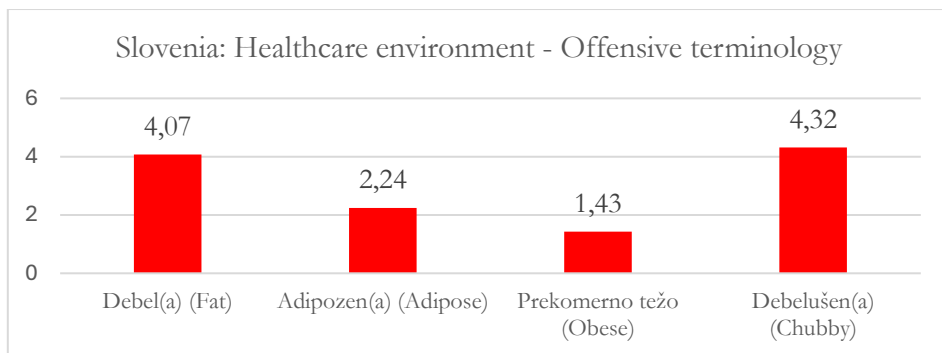


Graph 6: Acceptable terminology in healthcare environment

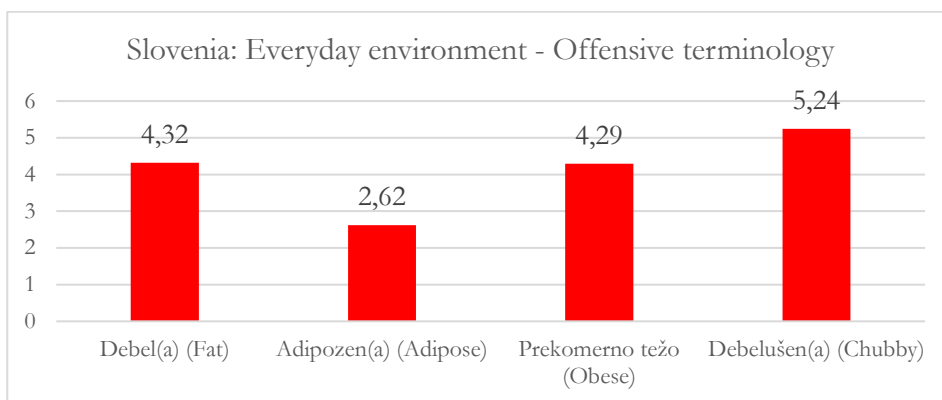


Graph 7: Acceptable terminology in everyday environment

The students were asked to choose the most offensive terms in a healthcare environment and in everyday environment and the term “debelušen (a)"/chubby was the most offensive to them, followed by “debel (a)"/fat. They explained that the adjective “debel (a)” in the Slovene language has a variety of meanings, including “fat”, “extensive”, “thick” or “strong” and can be combined with various nouns, such as “debela nogovica”/thick stockings or “debelo drevo”/strong tree, while the adjective “debelušen (a)” is only used when addressing a person.



Graph 8: Offensive terminology in healthcare environment



Graph 9: Offensive terminology in everyday environment

6 Discussion and conclusion

Within higher education study programs, students are rarely offered courses or multilingual didactic materials which inform them about the problems associated with obesity and being overweight. They need to be offered a direct, effective, efficient, and sustainable way of learning the importance of developing healthy lifestyle habits and preventing obesity. It is important to develop appropriate, multilingual sensitive communication skills, as the use of inappropriate terminology may have negative consequences for an individual who faces problems with obesity.

The study allowed us to evaluate the importance of introducing a new elective course on developing healthy lifestyle habits and preventing obesity as well as the importance of self-reflective journals to be used as a part of such course. The students acknowledged that they would choose such a course and when filing in self-reflective diaries they responded that it helped them to identify problematic areas in their everyday routine concerning eating habits, exercising and handling stress. Overall, and as a summary of the findings of this study, the participants valued experience. It was, however, surprising that students had never participated in self-reflections before and had no consistent protocol to do so.

The students' responses, summarised, demonstrate a high level of interest, a generally positive attitude towards the consistency of learning the dangers and causes of obesity and developing healthy lifestyle habits, and a wish to take such courses and to use the didactic materials. They found the digital, interactive Handbook interesting, informative and helpful, since it was prepared by a team of medical professionals, but the information was presented in easy-to-understand way, with concrete examples of healthy recipes, everyday challenges for physical exercise, and techniques to handle stress, such as the simple organization of a weekly routine on the basis "Treat your self," with a relaxing and enjoyable, simply organized experience for every day from Monday to Sunday (for example, take a nice long walk, take a bath, talk to your friends, etc.).

The study demonstrates that integrating self-reflecting diaries prompts self-awareness about students' own lifestyles and motivates them to live healthier, while studying and later. These findings may help to refine health promotion programs at the university level, to elaborate on the possibility of including courses on developing healthy lifestyle habits and preventing obesity in various university programs (not only in the programs of the Faculties of Medicine) and shows that self-reflective diaries have value in offering students the opportunity to examine and improve their lifestyles.

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A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITY SURROUNDINGS AND OBESITY RISK AMONG EUROPEAN STUDENTS: FINDINGS FROM THE EDU-FIT PROJECT

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Recognizing the importance of healthy habits, the EDU-FIT project aims to promote awareness and healthy lifestyles among students, shaping them as future leaders of healthier societies. We performed an analysis of best practices in developing healthy lifestyle habits among students. The study encompassed 1533 students with a demographic skew towards females (72%), a median age of 21 years, and a median BMI of 23 kg/m². Most were in early study years, primarily in Natural and Applied Sciences. Notably, there was high percentage of students who didn't reside in their home region (69%), raising concerns about access to university cafeterias (20% lacked access) and high reliance on takeaway food (80%). Despite 30% lacking access to exercise facilities, over 80% engaged in physical activity at least three times weekly, indicating a potential need for improved facilities. The absence of courses focused on healthy habits in university programs highlights a significant gap in promoting student well-being. This prompts the question: is university solely for education or also for nurturing well-being? EDU-FIT underscores that both knowledge and health are vital for future success.

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stress,
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1 Introduction

Student life presents a critical transitional period marked by increased academic pressure, psychological stress, and substantial lifestyle changes. Entering university often involves separation from family, greater personal responsibility, and increased independence, all of which significantly influence daily habits and health behaviors (Deliens, 2014; Vadeboncoeur, 2015). This transition is frequently associated with insufficient sleep, irregular and nutritionally poor diets, reduced physical activity, and elevated stress levels, factors that together contribute to body weight changes among students (Serlachius, 2007; Kozak, 2025).

Obesity has become an increasingly prevalent public health concern among young people in the European Union, posing serious health, social, and economic challenges (World Health Organization, 2022; NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2024). Weight gain during early adulthood is particularly concerning, as it often persists into later life and increases the risk of non-communicable diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and certain cancers (Sierpiński, 2025). In addition to physical health consequences, obesity is strongly associated with adverse mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem (Beck, 2025; Sanseverino, 2025).

University environments play a decisive role in shaping students' health-related behaviors. Factors such as access to healthy food options, opportunities for physical activity, availability of health-promoting infrastructure, and exposure to credible health information all influence lifestyle choices during this period (Fonderie, 2024; Wang, 2025). However, evidence suggests that many students rely primarily on digital and social media sources, which may lack scientific accuracy, for health information, while evidence-based guidance from universities and healthcare professionals is underutilized (Percheski, 2011; Schäfer, 2021).

Addressing obesity among young adults therefore requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach that integrates education, health promotion, environmental support, and policy interventions (Dejhalla, 2025). Collaboration between universities, public health institutions, policymakers, and communities is essential to promote sustainable healthy behaviors and prevent long-term health consequences.

In response to these challenges, the EDU-FIT project was initiated as a multinational collaboration involving university partners from Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal, Slovakia, and Norway. The project aims to enhance student health and well-being through accessible and sustainable online resources, supporting informed lifestyle choices related to nutrition, physical activity, and overall well-being (Shimizu, 2025). By targeting the university environment, EDU-FIT seeks to address key determinants of obesity risk during a formative life stage.

2 Methodology

The initial phase of the project involved the creation of a questionnaire. A comprehensive questionnaire comprising 18 questions was crafted to gather vital demographic information, study-related insights, and understand the impact of lifestyle on body weight. To streamline the process and ensure accessibility, Google Forms was employed. The questionnaire was translated into all partner languages, and a convenient link was disseminated through various social media platforms during November and December 2023 to facilitate student participation without the need for direct email contact. This approach aimed to enhance engagement and inclusivity within the study, fostering a seamless exchange of valuable data across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Each questionnaire commenced with a concise introduction elucidating its purpose, setting the context for participants. Subsequently, a series of thoughtfully designed questions were presented. To ensure transparency and ethical conduct, a disclaimer was included, outlining the confidentiality of responses and the voluntary nature of participation. This approach aimed to establish clarity and trust among respondents, fostering an environment conducive to candid and meaningful responses.

To fulfil the questionnaire, approximately 5 minutes were allocated for completion, respecting participants' time commitments. Given that no email contacts were utilized, GDPR compliance was ensured, safeguarding the privacy and data protection rights of respondents. The Ethics Committee of University Hospital Centre Zagreb and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb approved.

English version of the questionnaire

Dear Student,

We kindly request you to spare a few moments of your time to participate in a brief survey focusing on healthy lifestyles within university environments. Your responses will remain anonymous, and no personal data will be disclosed.

*Our initiative is part of the Erasmus plus EDU-FIT project (**INCLUSIVE SOCIAL EDUCATION FIT FOR HEALTHY LIFE-STYLE: PREVENTING OBESITY IN YOUNG ADULTS No 2023-1-SI01-KA220-HED-000154000**), a collaborative effort involving partners from six countries: Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal, Slovakia, and Norway. This project is proudly sponsored by the European Union and has a noble mission: to enhance student well-being through accessible and sustainable online resources.*

Your feedback will play a pivotal role in the development of tools and solutions aimed at fostering a healthier university experience for all. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and together, we can make a positive impact on the well-being of students like yourself.

****Demographic Information: ****

1. Gender:

- Male - Female - Other

2. Age (years):

3. Height (in centimeters):

4. Weight (in kilograms):

5. Year of Study:

- 1st Year - 2nd Year - 3rd Year - 4th Year - 5th Year - 6th Year

6. Area of Study:

- Business (accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing)
- Humanities (art, history, languages, literature, music, philosophy, religion, theatre)
- Natural and applied sciences (biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics, medicine)
- Social sciences (anthropology, education, geography, law, political science, psychology, sociology)

7. Do you study at your permanent residence?

- Yes - No

****Weight and Lifestyle: ****

8. Have you experienced any weight change during your study?

- Weight loss
- Maintained the same weight
- Gained less than 5 kg
- Gained 5-10 kg
- Gained more than 10 kg

9. What is the primary reason for your weight change?

- Stress
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Lack of physical activity

- Other (please specify):

**Diet and Nutrition: **

10. Do you have access to a university cafeteria (cantina)?

- Yes - No

11. How often per week do you eat in the cantina?

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more

12. How often per week do you cook?

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more

13. How often per week do you order take-away food?

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more

**Physical Activity: **

14. Do you have access to a place for exercising at the university?

- Yes - No

15. How often per week do you exercise?

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 or more

**Awareness and Information: **

16. Are you aware that food choices can affect climate change?

- Yes - No

17. Where do you primarily get information regarding a healthy lifestyle? (Select all that apply)

- Parents

- Friends

- Physician

- University

- Webpages and portals

- Social media

18. Do you have any course in your university program which focuses on developing healthy life-style habits?

- Yes - No

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your input is valuable in helping us understand the impact of university life on various aspects of well-being and lifestyle choices.

PRIVACY POLICY

The EDU-FIT project will manage, store, and use the data submitted through this form, including personal information (gender, age, among others) only for the purpose of evaluating, contacting, and ensuring the execution of the project. Your data can be requested, or any questions you have regarding your data answered, through the following email edu-fit.projekt@um.si. The data will be kept until the EDU-FIT project (Grant agreement ID: 2023-1-SI01-KA220-HED-000154000) no longer needs it to the execution of its activities or for reporting/ legal reasons, which may extend slightly beyond the project's duration.

Project EDU-FIT funded by the European Union, Erasmus+ programme. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

3 Analysis of the questionnaires

We conducted an analysis of a total of 1533 responses from students representing partner countries participating as universities, excluding Norway, which was a non-university partner. Furthermore, we gathered responses from Erasmus Plus students studying as exchange students. It's worth noting that most participants were from Croatia and Slovenia. Descriptive statistic was used.

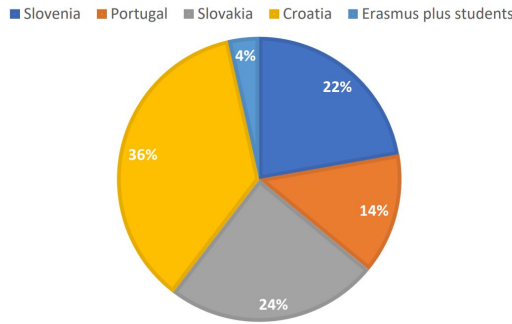


Figure 1: Participants country of residence

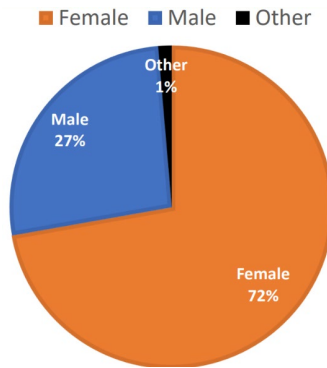


Figure 2 Participants by gender

Demographic and anthropometric survey analysis

The vast majority, 72%, of participants were females, and this trend was consistent across all countries. This could be attributed to the nature of the study they were involved in or perhaps reflects the specific interests of adolescent females in health-related topics.

The median age of the participants was 21 years, with a standard deviation of 4.8. Their median height was 170 cm, with a standard deviation of 9.2, while the median weight was 64 kg, with a standard deviation of 14.6. This yields a body mass index (BMI) of 22.1 kg/m². In average, all students had optimal BMI. Students from Slovenia had the lowest average BMI of 21.6 kg/m² and students from Croatia had the highest at 23.1 kg/m². Over 50% of the participants were in their first or second year of study, indicating that they had recently commenced their academic journey. This finding may introduce a potential bias, as new students are often more eager to engage in activities and research opportunities. Furthermore, their lifestyles are undergoing significant changes at this early stage, which could potentially impact their behaviors and responses differently compared to more established students. As their academic and personal routines evolve, their levels of engagement and susceptibility to various influences may also change over time.

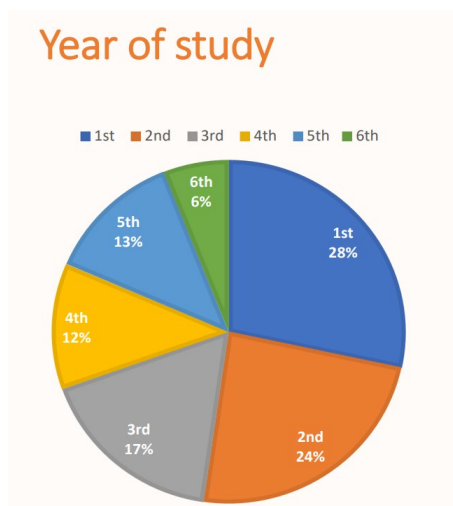


Figure 3: Participants year of study

A significant proportion of the participating students, nearly half, pursued studies in the Natural and Applied Sciences domain, encompassing fields such as biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics, and medicine. Approximately 20% of students were engaged in Social Sciences disciplines, including anthropology, education, geography, law, political science, psychology, and sociology. Similarly, another 20% were dedicated to Humanities

studies, spanning art, history, languages, literature, music, philosophy, religion, and theater.

Conversely, a smaller segment, comprising only 13%, focused their academic pursuits on Business-related disciplines, such as accounting, economics, finance, management, and marketing. This diverse distribution reflects the varied academic interests and pursuits among the student population, contributing to a rich and multifaceted learning environment.

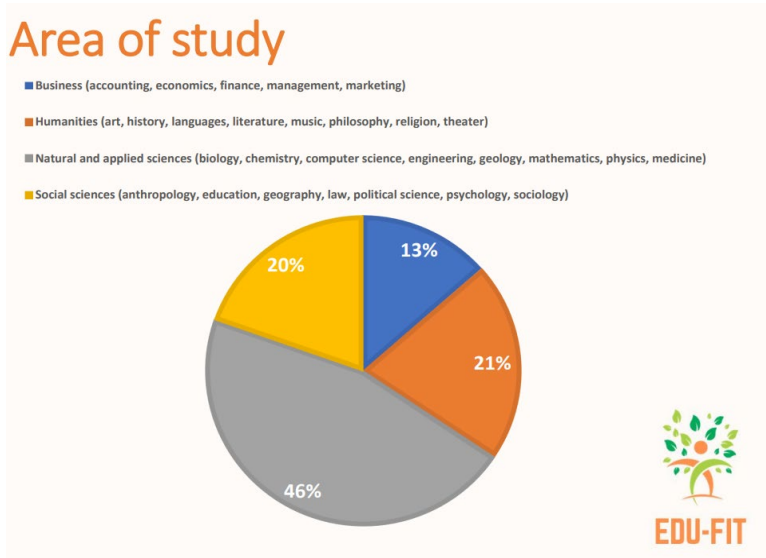


Figure 4: Participant’s area of study

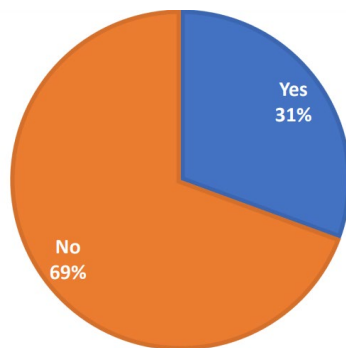


Figure 5: Participants by studying at permanent residence

Students were further queried about whether they study at their permanent residence. Astonishingly, nearly 70% indicated otherwise, suggesting a prevailing scenario where students must independently manage various aspects of their lives, including meals, housing arrangements, and both physical and mental well-being. This statistic underscores the considerable autonomy and responsibility shouldered by students as they navigate the complexities of academic life away from home.

Relationship between body weight and lifestyle

In our subsequent analysis, we directed our attention toward exploring the relationship between body weight and lifestyle. Participants were asked whether they had experienced any changes in weight during their studies. Surprisingly, approximately 65% of students reported either experiencing weight loss or maintaining their weight. However, 24% disclosed gaining less than 5 kg, 13% reported a weight gain between 5 to 10 kg, and 4% admitted to gaining more than 10 kg.

This statistic is cause for concern, particularly considering that a significant proportion of students are in their first two years of study. It raises the troubling prospect that if only those nearing the end of their studies were surveyed, the statistics could potentially be even more alarming.

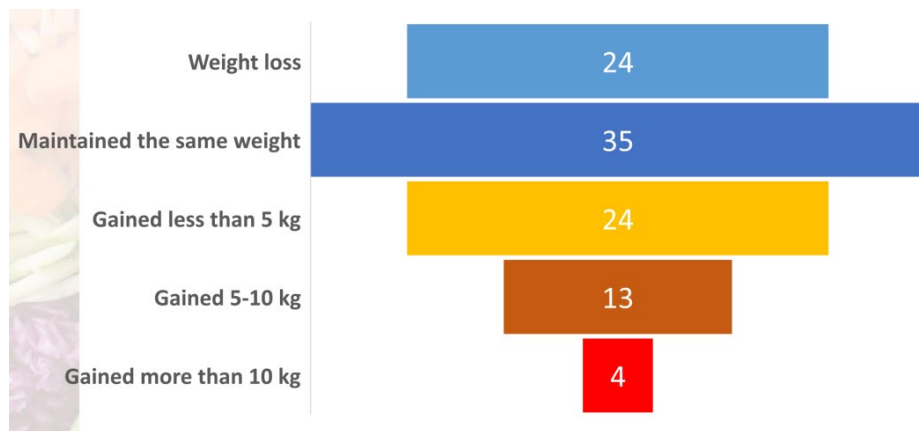


Figure 6: Change in weight during the study

The subsequent question delved into identifying the primary reasons behind students' weight changes. Alarming, 33% of respondents attributed their weight fluctuations to stress, indicating a significant risk factor impacting both mental and physical well-being. Conversely, less than 20% cited unhealthy eating habits and a lack of physical activity as contributing factors.

This data sheds light on the pervasive influence of stress on students' health, underscoring the need for interventions aimed at managing stress levels and fostering resilience.

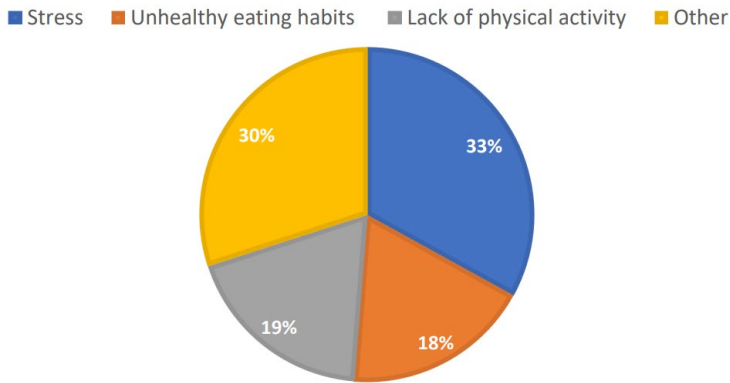


Figure 7: Primary reasons behind weight change

Nutrition

During our survey, students were questioned about their access to a university cafeteria, also known as a cantina. Surprisingly, close to 20% of respondents indicated that they did not have access to such facilities. This raises an important question regarding the well-being of those students who lack access to a cantina, particularly those who do not reside in a permanent location. How do they manage their daily meals? This inquiry highlights a potential gap in support services for students, especially those who may face challenges in sourcing affordable and nutritious meals while balancing academic commitments.

The subsequent question inquired about the frequency of students' visits to the

university cantina per week. Remarkably, nearly 50% of respondents revealed that they eat there only once a week, suggesting a reliance on other sources of food for the majority of their meals. This indicates that for many students, the cantina doesn't serve as a primary source of sustenance throughout the week.

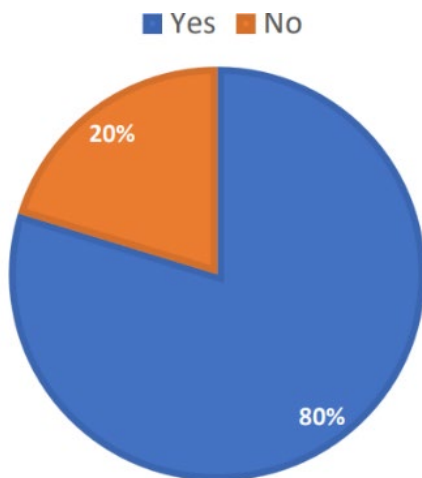


Figure 8: Access to a university cantina

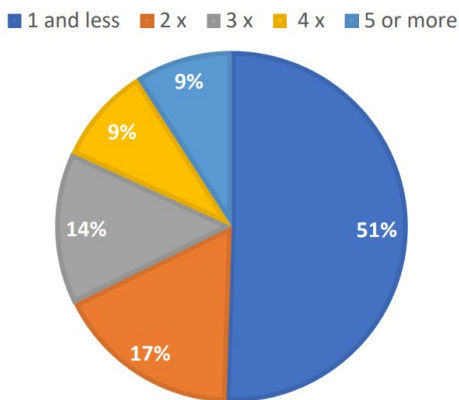


Figure 9: Frequenti of visit to cantina

Continuing our survey, students were asked about the frequency of their cooking per week. The responses varied considerably, reflecting the diverse circumstances of the student body. It's likely that factors such as regular use of the cantina, limited

access to cooking facilities, and perhaps a lack of awareness regarding the advantages of cooking contributed to this variety in responses.

This insight underscores the importance of further exploration into students' cooking habits and the factors influencing them. It presents an opportunity to address potential barriers to cooking, such as access to kitchen facilities or education about the benefits of home-cooked meals. By understanding and addressing these factors, universities can better support students in adopting healthier eating habits and empowering them to make informed choices about their nutrition and well-being.

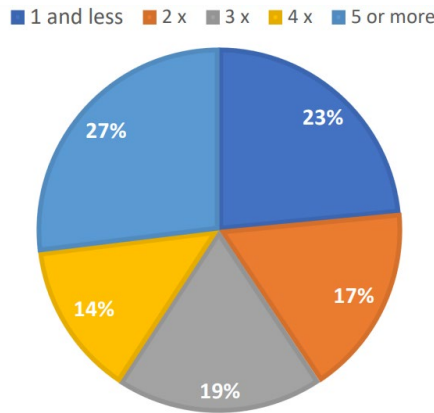


Figure 10: Frequency of cooking per week

In our investigation into nutrition habits, we posed a final question regarding the frequency of ordering take-away food per week. The results showed approximately 80% of students relying on take-away options rarely, once a week or less. We have to be aware that reliance on convenience foods is likely to provide meals of inferior quality compared to home-cooked alternatives.

The prevalence of take-away food or bakery products, sodas, high calorie snacks and sweets consumption underscores the importance of promoting healthier eating practices among students. By providing education about the nutritional value of homemade meals and offering support for cooking at home, universities can empower students to make more informed dietary choices. This approach not only

enhances their overall health and well-being but also cultivates habits that can benefit them long beyond their academic years.

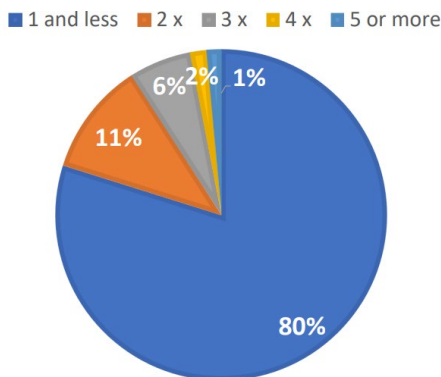


Figure 11: Frequency of ordering take-away food per week

Physical Activity

In our next set of questions focusing on physical activity, students were asked about their access to facilities for exercising at the university. Surprisingly, 30% of respondents indicated that they did not have access to such facilities. This finding raises concerns about the equitable availability of resources to support students' physical well-being on campus.

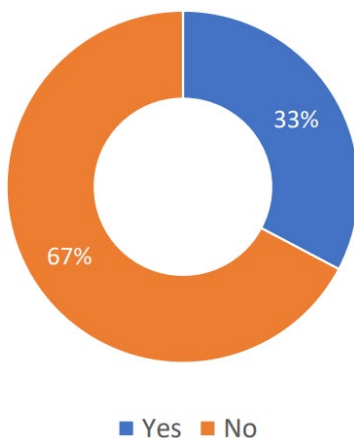


Figure 11: Access to facilities for exercising

Inquiring into students' weekly exercise routines, we found an discouraging trend: only 40% of respondents reported engaging in physical activity more than three times a week. This demonstrates a need for strategies for motivating students to become more active, including beyond the confines of the university campus.

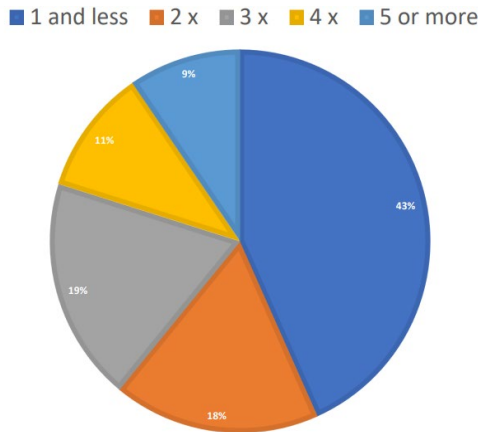


Figure 12: Engaging in physical activity per week

Information access and health

In our next series of questions, we turned our attention to information access, particularly regarding environmental awareness. Reflecting the growing concern for sustainability, students were asked if they were aware that food choices could influence climate change. Surprisingly, a significant majority—72%—demonstrated awareness of this critical connection.

This finding indicates a promising level of environmental consciousness among students, highlighting a growing understanding of the impact of food production and consumption on climate change.

In addition, we inquired about the primary sources from which students obtain information regarding a healthy lifestyle, allowing for multiple selections. The reliability and credibility of these sources are of great importance. Regrettably, the findings revealed that social media, webpages, and online portals emerged as the

predominant sources for such information, since these platforms are often fraught with unreliable or misleading content, influenced by commercial interests.

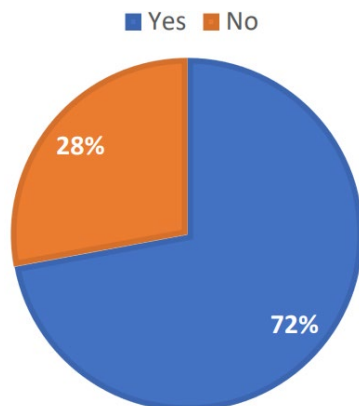


Figure 13: Awareness that food choices could influence climate change

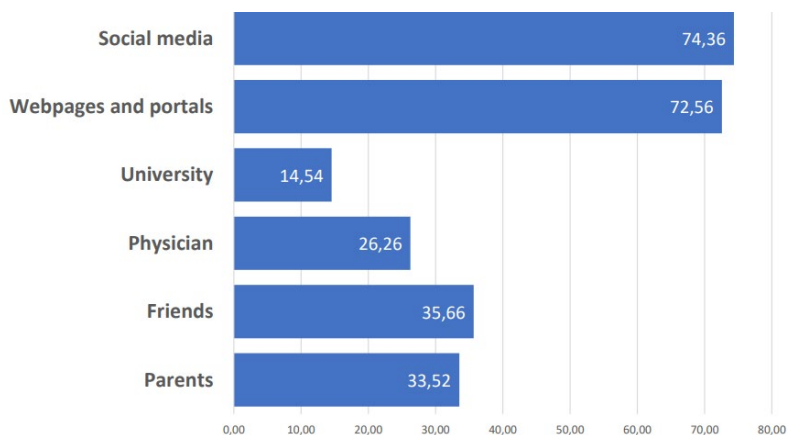


Figure 14: The primary sources of information regarding a healthy lifestyle

In contrast, traditional sources such as physicians and universities, which typically provide evidence-based and trustworthy information, scored lower in terms of being utilized by students. This discrepancy highlights the need for greater efforts to promote reliable sources of information regarding healthy lifestyles, ensuring that students have access to accurate and scientifically sound guidance. By enhancing awareness of credible sources and encouraging critical thinking skills, universities

can empower students to make informed decisions that positively impact their well-being.

In our final question, we sought insights into potential areas for improvement within university programs. Specifically, we asked students if their curriculum included any courses focused on developing healthy lifestyle habits. Surprisingly, nearly 80% of respondents indicated the absence of such courses in their university programs.

This disparity suggests a significant opportunity for universities to enhance their offerings in promoting holistic well-being among students. It's notable that the remaining 20% likely comprised students studying medicine, where education on healthy lifestyle habits is often integrated into the curriculum as a fundamental component.

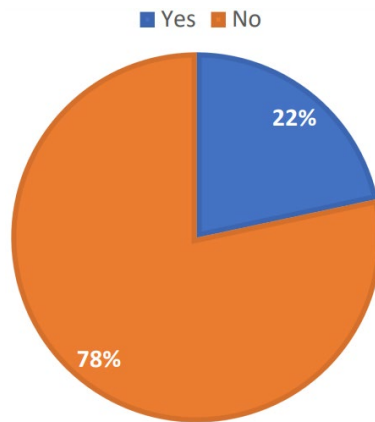


Figure 14: Presence of course at university which focuses on developing healthy lifestyle

4 Discussion

This cross-sectional analysis of 1,533 students from partner countries, primarily Croatia and Slovenia, provides evidence that university life represents a critical period for the development of health-related behaviors (Vadeboncoeur, 2015; Serlachius, 2007). Although the overall median BMI of participants remained within the normal range, the presence of multiple lifestyle-related risk factors suggests a

potential trajectory toward future weight gain and obesity if preventive measures are not implemented (NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2024).

A considerable proportion of students lived away from their permanent residence, increasing their responsibility for independent food choices and daily routines, a factor previously associated with suboptimal dietary habits and lifestyle instability (Deliens, 2014; Dejhalla, 2025). Limited access to university cafeterias and exercise facilities, together with low levels of regular physical activity, reflects environmental barriers that have been shown to negatively influence students' health behaviors (Fonderie, 2024; Wang, 2025). Although frequent take-away consumption was not dominant, this does not eliminate the need for structured education on nutrition, cooking skills, and stress management, particularly given the strong association between stress and weight change observed among university populations (Serlachius, 2007; Kozak, 2025).

The near absence of courses addressing healthy lifestyle habits within university curricula highlights a missed opportunity for higher education institutions to actively contribute to obesity prevention and overall well-being (Percheski, 2011; Schäfer, 2021). These findings reinforce the view that universities should function not only as centers of academic development but also as supportive environments for health promotion during early adulthood.

Within this context, the EDU-FIT project presents a targeted and evidence-informed response to the identified gaps. By promoting access to reliable information and encouraging sustainable lifestyle behaviors, EDU-FIT aligns with broader public health recommendations aimed at reducing obesity risk among young adults in the European Union (World Health Organization, 2022; Shimizu, 2025). Strengthening such initiatives may contribute to long-term improvements in student health outcomes and support the development of healthier future generations.

5 Conclusion

University students are a population at increased risk for developing unhealthy lifestyle patterns that may contribute to future obesity and related chronic diseases. Our findings highlight the need for universities to address environmental and educational gaps by improving access to healthy food, physical activity

opportunities, and structured health education. Initiatives such as the EDU-FIT project demonstrate the potential of targeted, evidence-based interventions to support healthier behaviors and long-term well-being among students.

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DESIGNING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM FOR OBESITY PREVENTION: INSIGHTS FROM THE EDU-FIT PROJECT

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This chapter outlines the outcomes of the EDU-FIT: Inclusive Social Education Fit for Healthy Lifestyle project, which aims to prevent obesity among young adults through education on healthy lifestyles. The outcome is the development of a curriculum for university education targeting a specific target group. The curriculum consists of four modules: understanding obesity, nutrition, movement in your environment, and communication with stress management. Each module includes theoretical knowledge, practical activities, discussions, reflection, and assessment. Students learn key concepts, analyse their own habits, plan meals, engage in physical activity, manage stress, and communicate about health. The curriculum emphasises an interdisciplinary approach, practical skills, and critical thinking. This chapter documents the curriculum development process and students' involvement in creating the modules and learning activities. The educational outcome supports the development of a personal health plan focused on long-term maintenance of a healthy lifestyle.

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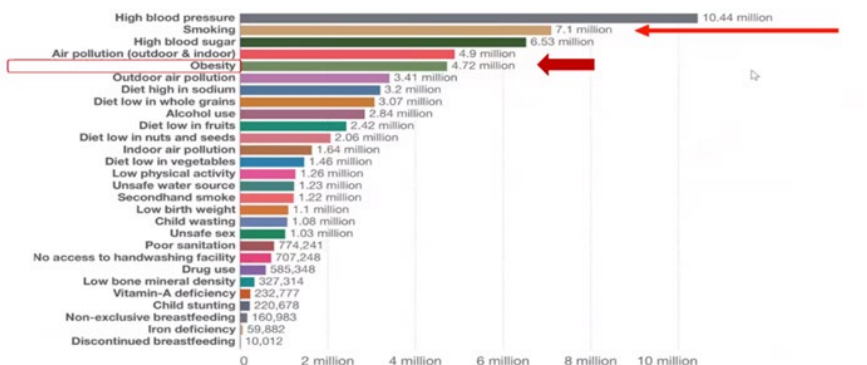
University of Maribor Press

1 Introduction

Obesity is a growing global issue that affects individuals across all age groups, educational backgrounds, and nationalities, in both developed and developing countries. According to the World Health Organisation (2025), the prevalence of adult obesity has doubled since 1990, while adolescent obesity has quadrupled. The EDU-FIT project titled "Inclusive Social Education Fit for a Healthy Lifestyle: Preventing Obesity in Young Adults" responds to this challenge by developing an interdisciplinary educational curriculum designed for university students. The curriculum is designed to promote awareness, encourage healthy habits, and empower young adults to make informed decisions about their lifestyle.

A central component of the EDU-FIT project is its emphasis on respectful and effective communication, particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as obesity. Research conducted within the project framework, including a survey of over 1,100 students from Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia, highlights the importance of language in shaping perceptions and outcomes in both healthcare and everyday settings. The curriculum incorporates these findings to foster a supportive learning environment and to equip students with the tools to navigate health-related conversations with empathy and accuracy.

Number of deaths by risk factors, World, 2017



Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 (GBD 2017) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2018

<https://ourworldindata>

Figure 1: Webinar EUBA (14.04.2025)

This outlines the development process, structure, and pedagogical foundations of the EDU-FIT curriculum. It provides an overview of the modules, learning objectives, teaching materials, and assessment strategies, offering a comprehensive guide for educators and institutions committed to promoting lifelong health and well-being among young adults.

1.1 Preparation of the Curriculum

The EDU-FIT curriculum was developed through a collaborative, research-driven process that integrated academic research with direct input from students and medical and fitness professionals in the field of health and wellness. The preparation phase included several key activities designed to ensure the curriculum would be relevant, inclusive, and engaging for its target audience: university students.

Research and Consultations

The curriculum was grounded in a review of existing materials and guidelines on obesity prevention, nutrition, physical activity, and mental health. This was complemented by consultations with experts in nutrition, fitness, and wellness, as well as educators and psychologists. Dedicated webinars organised by the EDU-FIT project members focused on developing guidelines for a healthy menu and provided additional insights into practical applications of dietary education. Building on the theoretical foundations of obesity and nutrition, the curriculum outlines the procedures from desktop research, expert consultations, and interviews that culminate in the final curriculum setting. It has been conducted to inform the curriculum on healthy lifestyle practices for young adults from the perspectives of academics, practitioners, physiologists, sports nutritionists, sports scientists, and strength and conditioning coaches.

Furthermore, the concepts were elaborated to enhance awareness and knowledge of obesity, thereby promoting the sustained development of physical habits among young adults (primarily higher-education students). The exercises were designed to leave room for the creative approach of the teacher and course participants.

The keyword for the EDU-FIT team has been defined as Obesity— which is abnormal or excessive fat accumulation—and represents a significant public health

crisis affecting children, adolescents, and adults worldwide. It increases the risk of multiple noncommunicable diseases, mortality, and substantial reductions in quality of life¹.

Another issue to consider is the health consequences of obesity, as defined by the WHO:

Obesity is linked to a wide range of physical and mental health problems, such as:

1. Cardiovascular Disease: Elevated risk of heart disease, hypertension, coronary artery disease, heart failure, and stroke.
2. Type 2 Diabetes: Obesity impairs insulin function, significantly increasing the risk of diabetes.
3. Several Cancers: The risk of various cancers, such as breast, ovarian, colorectal, pancreatic, liver, kidney, prostate, and endometrial cancer, is elevated by obesity.
4. Respiratory Disorders: Increased prevalence of sleep apnea and asthma.
5. Digestive and Liver Diseases: Higher rates of heartburn, fatty liver disease, gallbladder disease, and liver cirrhosis.
6. Musculoskeletal Conditions: Obesity increases stress on weight-bearing joints, resulting in osteoarthritis and chronic back pain.

Waist circumference- risk of CVS disease, diabetes- DM2



Figure 2: Webinar EUBA (14.04.2025)

¹ Djalalinia S, Qorbani M, Peykari N, Kelishadi R. Health impacts of Obesity. Pak J Med Sci. 2015 Jan-Feb;31(1):239-42. doi: 10.12669/pjms.311.7033. PMID: 25878654; PMCID: PMC4386197.

Moreover, according to the WHO, obesity in childhood and adolescence increases the risk of early-onset chronic diseases and earlier mortality in adulthood.

Student Interviews and Surveys

To ensure the curriculum reflected the real needs and interests of students, the EDU-FIT team in Slovakia conducted video interviews with 22 students of various ages and genders. These interviews, conducted initially in Slovak and later translated into English, explored students' attitudes toward healthy eating, stress management, and lifestyle habits. Questions addressed topics such as food label literacy, dieting experiences, coping mechanisms for stress, and preferences for learning formats.

The interviews, individual consultations and the study of relevant literature summarised the ideas to develop a basic scheme of the exercises, which should

- encourage daily activity (60 minutes or more) that includes aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities,
- focus also on balance-training, flexibility, and activities. While physical activity alone has modest effects on weight loss, its health benefits, when combined with dietary management, are profound and well-supported.

Sustainable solutions require multi-layered approaches, including supportive environments, access to resources, and behaviour change support.

Table 1: Summary of expert interviews

Effect of Obesity	Increased Risk	Physical Exercise Benefit
Cardiovascular diseases	Yes (heart disease, stroke, etc.)	Reduces risk, improves heart health
Type 2 Diabetes	Yes	Improves insulin sensitivity, lowers risk
Certain cancers	Higher (breast, colon, pancreatic)	Reduces some cancer risks
Respiratory disorders	Yes (sleep apnea, asthma)	Some improvements in symptoms
Musculoskeletal disorders	Osteoarthritis, chronic pain	Improves strength, reduces symptoms
Mental health and quality of life	Stigma, depression, and social issues	Improved mood, mental health
All-cause and cardiovascular mortality	Higher	Reduces overall mortality risk

2 The Role of Physical Activity

Physical activity is a vital element in the prevention and management of obesity and its complications. Scientific and professional guidelines universally recommend regular exercise for all age groups, with intensity adjusted according to individual fitness and age.

According to a study by Rippe JM and Hess (1998)², physical activity directly contributes to maintaining energy balance, which is crucial for effective weight management. Therefore, increased activity reduces body fat and supports healthy weight loss and maintenance.

On the other hand, several studies have shown that aerobic exercise of at least 150-300 minutes per week at moderate to vigorous intensity is associated with significant reductions in body weight, waist circumference, and body fat percentage, as shown in large meta-analyses³. Additionally, nearly all studies confirm that exercise helps preserve or increase lean muscle mass during weight loss.

All in all, the curriculum has been designed through motivation hints, claiming that regular exercise reduces the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, improves insulin sensitivity, lipid profiles, and reduces chronic inflammation—all risk factors for metabolic and cardiovascular disease, enhances mental health, self-esteem, and cognitive function, necessary for long-term weight management and quality of life⁴.

Additional health benefits of physical activity include improved bone health, balance, and musculoskeletal strength, as well as better sleep and reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety—benefits that extend throughout the lifespan, with impacts on health, productivity, and healthcare costs.

The findings from structured interviews revealed that students:

² Rippe JM, Hess S. The Role of Physical Activity in the Prevention and Management of Obesity. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1998 Oct;98(10 Suppl 2):S31-8. doi: 10.1016/s0002-8223(98)00708-1. PMID: 9787734.

³ Jayedi A, Soltani S, Emadi A, Zargar M, Najafi A. Aerobic Exercise and Weight Loss in Adults: A Systematic Review and Dose-Response Meta-Analysis. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2024;7(12):e2452185. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.52185.

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-basics/benefits/index.html>

- are curious about how food is produced and its environmental impact.
- desire more diverse food options, including vegetarian and gluten-free meals.
- struggle with stress management during university studies.
- prefer interactive learning formats such as discussions, case studies, and group projects.

These insights were important in shaping the curriculum's structure, content, and teaching methods.

3 Long-term weight management

The EDU-FIT curriculum also includes personalised exercise plans to improve long-term weight-management outcomes. Personalised workout plans can significantly improve long-term weight management outcomes by aligning exercise routines with an individual's unique characteristics, goals, and circumstances. Here's how personalisation makes a difference:

Tailored to Individual Needs and Goals: Personalised plans consider factors such as current fitness level, medical history, preferred activities, body composition, and weight-loss or health goals. This increases the relevance and effectiveness of each workout, making it more likely to efficiently target fat loss, muscle gain, or other specific outcomes.

Increased Motivation and Adherence: When workouts align with personal interests, capabilities, and schedules, individuals are more likely to enjoy exercising and stick with the program. Higher enjoyment and lower boredom help young people maintain their routines, which is critical for long-term success.

Holistic Support for Lifestyle: Personalisation extends beyond exercise to encompass nutrition, sleep, stress management, and behaviour change, thereby targeting the root causes of weight gain and fostering healthy habits for life.

Flexibility and Adaptability: As an individual loses weight or improves fitness, a personalised plan can be recalibrated—adding new challenges, switching routines, or adjusting intensity to prevent stagnation and continually encourage progress⁵.

Additionally, scientific research confirms that individualising physical activity programs leads to greater improvements in cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, and overall cardiometabolic health, all of which are vital for weight management and long-term health. It has been claimed that people are more likely to maintain a physically active lifestyle when their exercise regimen is personally meaningful and accessible, reducing the likelihood of relapse or abandonment⁶.

In summary, personalised workout plans are powerful tools for sustainable weight loss because they optimise effectiveness, boost motivation, prevent injury, and encourage long-term adherence.

4 The Role of Student's Motivation

The curriculum primarily focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which should be maintained throughout the course. For any personalised workout plan to truly succeed, particularly with long-term goals such as weight management or overall fitness improvement, commitment and motivation are crucial. Commitment to a trainer, workout partner, digital app, or fitness community increases the likelihood of adhering to a workout plan. Regular check-ins or scheduled reports foster a sense of responsibility and help individuals overcome periods of low enthusiasm or external distractions. These mechanisms (apps, journals, and coaching sessions) enable participants to monitor their progress and quickly identify setbacks, allowing timely adjustments to the workout plan and facilitating continuous improvement. External support, such as that from personal trainers, group classes, or friends, provides encouragement and gentle pressure. This can be vital for maintaining motivation when willpower is low or progress stalls.

⁵ <https://www.miamilivingmagazine.com/post/tailed-to-you-personalized-workout-and-meal-plans-for-maximum-results> (27 July 2025).

<https://www.hitonefitness.com/how-personalized-workouts-can-maximize-your-results/> (27 July 2025).

⁶ <https://transperitymedicalproviders.com/personalized-weight-management-plans-why-they-work/> (28 July 2025).

Moreover, motivation—whether intrinsic (driven by personal satisfaction) or extrinsic (driven by rewards, social recognition, or goals)—is a significant factor in how consistently someone adheres to their workout plan. Personalised approaches that tap into what motivates an individual (improving health, reducing stress, achieving specific goals) are especially effective. Incorporating activities that individuals enjoy increases the likelihood of regular participation and long-term adherence. Enjoyable, meaningful workouts turn exercise from a chore into a rewarding experience. Achieving small, personalised milestones can boost confidence and motivation, reinforcing the belief that long-term success is possible and sustainable.

When these aspects are built into a personalised plan, users are more likely to adhere to routines, overcome challenges, and ultimately achieve sustained health benefits. Scientific literature and expert recommendations emphasise that these two factors are critical for maintaining physical activity, preventing attrition, and achieving lasting fitness and weight-management goals.

Obesity severely harms almost every body system. Regular, tailored exercise is not just for weight control; it is essential for reducing the risk of many obesity-related illnesses, enhancing both physical and mental well-being, and improving overall quality of life.

Our new curricula emphasise the importance of physical activity for health, serving as both a preventive measure and a therapeutic tool. This approach is supported by interdisciplinary science and designed to be accessible to university students across the EU.

4 Obesity, society, communication and stress management

Long-term monitoring of activities helps identify unhealthy patterns and assess risks before diseases like obesity develop. Chae-Gyun Lim proposes several methods for analysing healthy lifestyle patterns in the data⁷.

⁷ Lim CG, Kim ZM, Choi HJ. Developing a Mobile Wellness Management System for Healthy Lifestyle by Analyzing Daily Living Activities. *Stud Health Technol Inform.* 2017; 245:146-150. PMID: 29295070.

Digital tools, such as apps, can help both clinicians and individuals set, track, and celebrate progress toward lifestyle goals—empowering behavioural change and self-responsibility.

The practice has to be carried out systematically in several ways:

- a) Defining specific, realistic, and trackable goals related to movement, nutrition, and rest.
- b) Using journals or digital trackers to reflect on daily habits.
- c) Engaging in regular check-ins with supportive networks (friends, clinicians, or peers).

Self-awareness—a central theme in positive psychology and mindfulness practices—enables individuals to recognise their feelings, motives, and strengths, thereby facilitating the initiation and maintenance of healthful changes. Mind–Body skills courses (in meditation and guided imagery) increase present-moment awareness, connection to others, and more intentional decision-making⁸.

There are strategies we proposed in the curriculum to develop positive changes in mind and body:

1. Mindfulness meditation to observe thoughts non-judgmentally.
2. Guided imagery for envisioning success and dealing with stress.
3. Group reflection to share experiences and broaden perspective.

Studies indicate that satisfaction and improvement come from reasonable, incremental goals and celebrating every small win, rather than waiting for “perfect” outcomes⁹.

To transform insight into action, the courses begin by using self-reflection to pinpoint unhelpful thoughts or emotional triggers that contribute to unhealthy habits. Once identified, the participants then practise cognitive restructuring by consciously shifting negative self-talk into constructive and positive affirmations.

⁸ van Vliet M, Jong MC, Jong M. A Mind-Body Skills Course Among Nursing and Medical Students: A Pathway for an Improved Perception of Self and the Surrounding World. *Glob Qual Nurs Res*. 2018 Oct 17;5:2333393618805340. doi: 10.1177/2333393618805340. PMID: 30349869; PMCID: PMC6194914.

⁹ Rakowski W, Wells BL, Lasater TM, Carleton RA. Correlates of expected success at health habit change and its role as a predictor in health behavior research. *Am J Prev Med*. 1991 Mar-Apr; 7(2): 89-94. PMID: 1910893.

Finally, these insights should be translated into concrete, specific behavioural goals. For example, instead of broadly aiming to "eat healthier," the students set a clear goal like, "When I feel stressed, I'll take a 5-minute walk instead of snacking."

Awareness of personal and societal biases is key to both self-understanding and effective communication. Positive affirmations, practising empathy, and seeking diverse viewpoints help challenge internal prejudices and promote more open-minded, inclusive attitudes towards health, body image, and weight management¹⁰.

The Mayo Clinic¹¹ suggests that positive thinking strategies—rooted in gratitude practices, a growth mindset, and self-compassion—elevate mood, reduce stress, and support sustained lifestyle changes.

Techniques include:

- Identifying areas for change and focusing on incremental improvements.
- Using humour to navigate difficulties and setbacks.
- Engaging regularly in gratitude practices, such as keeping a gratitude journal.
- Surrounding oneself with positive influences and constructive feedback.

5 Curriculum Structure

The final curriculum consists of four modules:

Understanding Obesity – onsite group and individual activities.

Dietary Guidelines – online self-management training.

Physical Activity Guidelines – individual and group training.

Creating a Personal Plan for Lifelong Health – blended learning format.

¹⁰ See 20 positive affirmations... In: <https://www.powerofpositivity.com/free-your-mind-biased-thinking/> (accessed on 28 July 2025).

¹¹ Mayo Clinic: In: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950> (accessed on 28 July 2025).

Each module includes a mix of theoretical themes, practical tasks, and reflective exercises. Students are encouraged to engage in meal planning, physical activity tracking, and personal health evaluations, fostering both knowledge and behavioural change.

Following these concepts, we have introduced the Essential Skills for Obesity Prevention Education, which have been summed up as follows:

Table 2: Strategies supported in the curriculum

Theme	Key Skills Developed	Example Tools/Practices
Monitoring habits	Self-reflection, data tracking, and goal assessment	Journals, health apps, and clinician feedback
Self-awareness & capabilities	Mindfulness, meditation, and emotion identification	Mind–body courses, mindfulness practices
Expectations vs. reality	Realistic goal setting, adaptability, resilience	SMART goals, progress celebration
Changing thoughts & behaviours	Cognitive restructuring, positive self-talk	Affirmations, reframing exercises
Overcoming bias	Empathy, perspective-taking, open-mindedness	Group reflection, affirmations
Positive thinking	Gratitude, optimism, growth mindset	Gratitude journal, social support
Evidence-based communication	Plain language, audience adaptation, counteracting misinformation with facts	Infographics, health literacy resources

When integrated into obesity-prevention efforts through a specifically tailored course, these communication practices strengthen self-regulation, foster social connectedness, and enable more adaptive stress responses, leading to healthier long-term outcomes. The literature in positive psychology, mindfulness, and behavioural medicine highlights the pivotal role of communication in building resilience and supporting behavioural change for obesity prevention.

The curriculum content of the EDU-FIT project aims to integrate a range of models and platforms, led by experienced, certified coaches, that facilitate social support—through group chats, forums, or peer mentoring—and capitalise on the motivational benefits of community. Sharing experiences, challenges, and encouragement with others enhances resilience, reduces feelings of isolation, and fosters long-term participation.

Professionally organised interventions, whether human- or digitally based, can provide immediate feedback or adaptive recommendations—for example, adjusting goals if a user is stressed. This adaptability is associated with improved stress-coping and more sustained weight-management outcomes.

Overall, the pedagogic content within the designed curriculum strongly advocates ongoing research and creative adaptability among coaches, which are essential for guiding the development of communication tools that are personalised, accessible, evidence-based, and adaptable, offering real benefits for stress and weight management. This ensures users receive the appropriate message, through the appropriate medium, at the appropriate time—maximising both effectiveness and reach.

6 Methodologies

The EDU-FIT curriculum was designed using a learner-centred, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning approach, tailored to university students in Europe. The didactic strategy integrates active learning, reflection, and real-world application, ensuring that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop practical skills and personal insights that will help them achieve their goals.

Key Didactic Methods

1. Modular Structure

The curriculum is divided into five modules:

- Understanding Obesity
- Nutrition
- Movement in Your Environment
- Communication and Stress Management
- Preventing and Managing Obesity

Each module includes:

- learning goals
- theoretical introduction
- practical tasks
- group and individual activities
- assessment tools

This structure supports active learning, where students build on prior knowledge and progressively deepen their understanding of the chosen topic.

2. Active Learning Techniques

Students engage in:

- group discussions to explore concepts collaboratively,
- case studies to analyse real-life scenarios,
- role-playing to simulate decision-making and communication,
- workshops for hands-on practice (such as cooking and exercise planning),
- field trips to markets and food environments.

These methods foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and social learning.

3. Inquiry-Based Learning

Students are encouraged to:

- research credible sources on obesity and nutrition,
- conduct interviews with experts (such as doctors and nutritionists),
- compare and evaluate information,
- present findings in class.

4. Personalised Learning

Activities such as:

- meal planning,
- fitness tracking,
- mindfulness exercises,
- self-assessment questionnaires.

These allow students to relate content to their own lives, promoting self-awareness and motivation for behaviour change.

5. Multimodal Instruction

The curriculum uses:

- video lectures,
- presentations,
- handouts and infographics,
- apps and digital tools,
- interactive quizzes

This supports diverse learning styles and enhances students' participation and motivation.

Assessment and Feedback

These assessment forms are integrated throughout the course to help students gauge their progress and solidify their understanding. They are meant to be checkpoints, not high-stakes tests.

Online Quizzes

Following each topic, a short online quiz is provided. These quizzes are designed to quickly assess comprehension of the material covered. They serve as a valuable tool for determining mastery of key concepts before progressing.

Case-Based Discussions

Participation in group discussions involves analysing real-world scenarios. This component focuses not only on theoretical understanding but also on applying knowledge to practical situations and integrating diverse perspectives from peers.

Weekly Reflection Journals

A reflection journal is to be completed each week. This offers an opportunity to connect course content with personal observations and insights, thereby deepening understanding and individualising the learning journey.

Research Essay

A research essay requires an in-depth analysis of obesity-related challenges within a specific population. The essay must also propose evidence-based solutions to these challenges.

Group Presentation

For the group presentation, students will develop and deliver an obesity-prevention campaign targeting young adults. This assessment emphasises collaborative work and the practical application of knowledge.

Final Exam

The final exam will comprise multiple-choice, short-answer, and applied problem-solving questions, assessing a broad understanding of the course content.

The final project

It should involve developing a detailed, realistic plan to prevent or manage obesity in a specific setting (school, university, workplace, or community). The students will demonstrate:

- An understanding of risk factors.

- Application of public health strategies.
- Critical use of research and policy frameworks.

Practical Skills Evaluation

The course will include mainly practical components (in health sciences or nutrition programs), so students have to be evaluated on:

- Interviewing Skills – using motivational interviewing techniques.
- Nutritional Assessment – analysing dietary habits and suggesting improvements.
- Program Planning – creating SMART goals for an intervention.

Feedback Process

All assessments come with structured feedback. Instructors provide insights into strengths and areas for improvement, and everyone will be encouraged to reflect and revise in response to the comments received. These tools help educators monitor progress and provide constructive feedback.

Summary

Medical advancements in the 21st century, supported by ongoing research, have been remarkable. As a result, people today have a greater chance of living longer, with many diseases now treatable and life-saving interventions available for accidents, injuries, strokes, cancer, and more. However, the key question is no longer simply about living longer but about the quality of life we want to achieve.

The answer lies in early prevention and education, starting from adolescence, since health significantly influences relationships, family life, careers, and overall well-being. Obesity, for instance, often caused by a mix of dietary habits, physical inactivity, mental health issues, and genetic factors, can lead to numerous preventable diseases. Addressing these challenges requires research that translates effectively into practical solutions.

The EDU-FIT curriculum adopts this approach by employing modern, inclusive, and participatory educational methods that focus on lifelong learning. It empowers students to take charge of their health, combining knowledge with hands-on practice and fostering both personal growth and methodological skills.

7 Conclusion

The purpose of this curriculum is to support educators in teaching an academic course on healthy lifestyles and well-being for university students. However, these materials can also be used in other settings with similar target audiences to educate audiences about obesity prevention.

The objectives of this course are to provide nutrition education, and encourage students to develop healthy lifestyle habits, such as managing a balanced diet and increase physical activity. This should help young people apply nutrition principles to their own circumstances and make informed decisions about their dietary habits and physical activity.

The curriculum is divided into five modules, each including detailed instructions for the educator. Each module includes a theoretical introduction to the topic, exercises, discussion topics, reflection (i.e., feedback), and additional materials for further activities, all of which will be included in the appendix. The curriculum addresses the following key themes:

- a) Basic Concept of Health and Obesity
- b) Eating Habits and Cultural and Social Influences
- c) Food, Nutrition, and Personal Health
- d) Consumer Aspects of Foods
- e) Food Preparation
- f) Exercise and Fitness
- g) Stress Management

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UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY NUTRITION DURING LATE ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD IN THE UNIVERSITY SETTING

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Adolescence and young adulthood represent a dynamic developmental stage in life characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, accompanied by increased nutritional and energy requirements. Nevertheless, dietary habits among young people are frequently inadequate, contributing to both undernutrition and a growing prevalence of overweight and obesity, which represent risk factors for the development of non-communicable diseases later in life. The transition to university is a particularly sensitive period as individuals begin to make independent dietary choices, often influenced by social, economic, and environmental factors, as well as limited nutrition-related knowledge. During this stage, healthy eating should emphasize varied and balanced meals, adequate hydration, appropriate portion sizes and the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, while limiting added sugars and highly processed foods. The implementation of targeted educational initiatives, accessible tools and supportive university food environments is essential for encouraging sustainable healthy eating behaviors and improving long-term health outcomes.

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1 Introduction

Adolescence constitutes one of the most rapid and multifaceted developmental phases across the human lifespan. This stage is characterized by profound physical, cognitive, and emotional maturation, accompanied by substantially increased nutritional and energy requirements, while adolescent nutrition continues to be regarded as a largely overlooked public health concern (Best and Ban, 2021). During this period, accelerated brain development occurs, influencing emotional control, cognitive processing, and decision-making capacities (Johnson, Blum and Giedd, 2009).

At the same time, adolescents increasingly develop peer-oriented social relationships and commonly engage in exploratory and risk-taking behaviors (Johnson, Blum and Giedd, 2009; Spear, 2000). Another pitfall of this period is that young people consider themselves healthy, and are therefore less motivated to protect their health, take care of their diet and engage in physical activity. Concurrently, intense physical growth increases the demand for nutrients such as energy, protein, calcium, iron, and other essential micronutrients, with required intake levels frequently surpassing those recommended for adults (Norris, Frongillo, Black et al., 2022; NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2017; Golden, Steven; Committee on Nutrition, 2014). Nutritional status during adolescence plays a critical role in shaping physical growth, cognitive function, and long-term socioeconomic potential.

Despite its importance, insufficient dietary intake remains widespread worldwide. This includes both undernutrition—manifesting as micronutrient deficiencies and growth impairment—as well as overnutrition, developed as a consequence of excessive energy intake leading to overweight and obesity (Khara and Mates, 2015).

Although adequate nutrition is vital throughout the lifespan, it is especially crucial during adolescence, as it supports accelerated growth processes and contributes to the establishment of long-term health trajectories. Notably, unhealthy eating behaviors adopted during this period often track into adulthood, thereby substantially increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life (The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, 2022).

2 University studying period as a critical transition period

As late adolescence is inherently a complex stage of life, the transition from the parental home to university represents a critical period for many young adults. This transition introduces new challenges, including the responsibility for independently managing dietary behaviors. Eating behaviors during this stage are shaped by a combination of individual characteristics and external factors such as food availability, cultural and inherited norms, financial constraints, institutional environments but also factors like policies and influence of peer pressure, media and advertising (Figure 1).

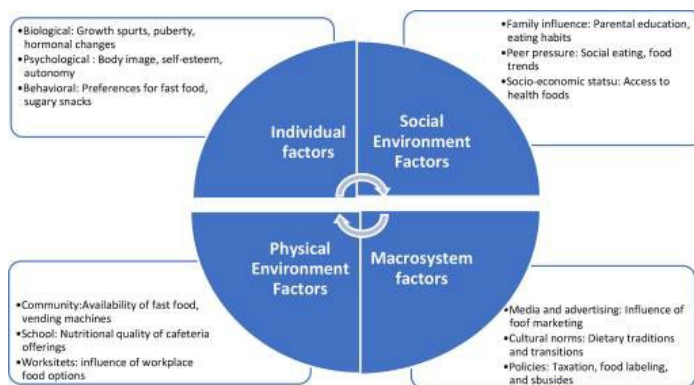


Figure 1: Graphical Chart showing key factors affecting adolescent nutrition, adopted from Parajuli and Prangthip (2025).

Attempts to adopt healthier eating behaviors are frequently impeded by various perceived or experienced barriers, including culinary traditions, social influences, entrenched habits, and limited availability or the higher cost of nutritious foods (Sogari et al., 2018; Mc Morrow et al., 2017). Furthermore, insufficient nutritional knowledge or access to relevant information, along with a general lack of motivation to modify dietary practices, may further compromise adherence to healthy eating patterns (Mc Morrow et al., 2017). Although the provision of highly technical or detailed nutritional information alone has shown limited effectiveness as an intervention strategy (Sogari et al., 2019) the development and implementation of easily accessible, student-oriented tools may facilitate knowledge dissemination within this population and support the integration of healthy dietary principles into daily routines.

An example of such an approach is the EDU-FIT project which focuses on promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and preventing obesity among young adults through interdisciplinary and educational strategies. Information about the EDU-FIT project are available at the official website listed in the literature.

2.1 Obesity among adolescents

Adolescent obesity represents one of the major global public health concerns, with high and often increasing prevalence. In Europe, approximately one in four adolescents is affected by overweight or obesity, although prevalence varies greatly by country, gender and socioeconomic status. Key drivers include poor dietary patterns (such as frequent consumption of fast food and highly sugary and salty foods) and insufficient physical activity, with excessive time spent in front of screens. Structural factors, such as low income limiting access to healthier options, along with influences like social media and mental health, also contribute to the creation of an obesogenic environment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) "in 2022, over 390 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 years were overweight. The prevalence of overweight (including obesity) among children and adolescents aged 5–19 has risen dramatically from just 8% in 1990 to 20% in 2022. The rise has occurred similarly among both boys and girls: in 2022, 19% of girls and 21% of boys were overweight" (NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, 2024).

As mentioned before, the health consequences of obesity are extensive and well documented. Excess body weight during childhood and adolescence is associated with a greater risk and earlier onset of various NCDs, such as arterial hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, neurodegenerative diseases, as well as malignant diseases. In addition to physical health effects, childhood and adolescent obesity also have adverse psychosocial consequences, including stigmatisation, discrimination, and bullying, thus negatively affecting school performance and quality of life (World Health Organization, 2025).

2.2 Prevalence and associated factors of overweight and obesity among students

Upon entering university, students often adopt new lifestyle behaviors that may negatively impact their health. According to Sahadeo et al. (2025), students understand the components of a healthy diet, recognize the impact of dietary habits on health, and show awareness of sustainable eating practices. However, several factors hinder their ability to maintain healthy diet, including challenges in avoiding unhealthy food options and the higher cost of healthier choices. Limited awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals further contributes to the prevalence of unhealthy and unsustainable dietary behaviors among university students. Meals are often irregular frequently consisted of high-energy foods rich in salt and sugar, such as bakery products, cured meats, fast food, snacks and sweets. Along with a lack of physical activity, described dietary pattern can have a negative effect on health.

The global prevalence of overweight among university students ranges from 20% to 40%, highlighting the scale of the issue, according to Peltzer et al. (2014). Various factors have been associated with overweight and obesity in this population. They include sedentary behaviour, better socioeconomic status, living in rural origin, drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, as well as negative social impacts such as family, peers, and social media (Ilić et al., 2024).

3 Methodology

This paper work is based on a systematic review of relevant literature concerning the dietary habits of adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on the transitional university period. The review includes scientific articles, reports from the World Health Organization, recommendations from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and projects and initiatives aimed at promoting healthy dietary patterns among students. Key sources were selected based on relevance, currency and methodological quality. Special attention was given to dietary patterns, intake of macro- and micronutrients and the introduction of practical recommendations for healthy eating habits in the university setting. The results and guidelines were synthesized into practical recommendations that can serve as a foundation for further research and implementation in university nutrition policies.

4 Results

4.1 Basics of proper nutrition during late adolescence and young adulthood

Given current trends, the growing body of scientific evidence linking diet and health, as well as the fact that healthy eating habits are acquired from an early age, it is important to recognize that education about proper nutrition is essential throughout all stages of life. Scientific literature highlights an insufficient level of knowledge about healthy lifestyle habits among younger generations, including knowledge related to food choices (Buyuktuncer et al., 2018).

Proper (healthy) nutrition can be defined as a dietary pattern that supports overall health, reduces disease risk and ensures adequate intake of essential nutrients in line with individual energy requirements (Neufeld et al., 2021). There are some principles of properly balanced diet:

- Variety – involves the consumption of diverse foods from different food groups to meet individual energy and nutritional needs. Nutritionally dense foods ensures significant amounts of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) with a relatively low energy content;
- Balance – refers to the proportion of different food groups in individual's overall food intake. Imbalances occur when certain groups are consumed in either excessive or insufficient amounts relative to the total diet. World Health Organization (2025) advises that a healthy diet should emphasize foods such as vegetables, fruits, legumes (like chickpeas, lentiles, beans), nuts, and whole grains (for example oats, millet, barley, bulgur, brown rice), with a daily intake of minimally 400 g (approximately five portions) of fruits and vegetables including starchy varieties. Also, it is recommended to limit intake of food that may have negative impact on health if consumed in amounts greater than recommended. Such food include salt (no more than 5 to 6 g of salt per day, or about one teaspoon), alcohol (up to one alcoholic drink per day for women and two for men), saturated fatty acids (less than 10% of total daily energy intake), trans fatty acids (less than 1% of total daily energy intake), cholesterol (under 300 mg per day), and added sugars (less than 10% of total daily energy intake);

- Moderation – refers to consuming an amount of food that meets, but does not exceed, the body's daily energy requirements (Lawrence, 2024).

Daily energy needs are individual and depend on age, gender, body composition and physical activity. The daily energy needs of young adults (aged from 18 to 29 years) are defined depending on gender and the amount of physical activity. The European Food safety Agency (EFSA) provides the recommendations stated in table 1 (EFSA, 2017).

Table 1: Average daily energy requirements of young adults according to gender and amount of physical activity

Level of physical activity	Male (kcal)	Female (kcal)
Low level of physical activity	2341	1888
Moderate level of physical activity	2675	2149
High level of physical activity	3009	2412
Very high level of physical activity	3344	2675

The food we consume represents a source of energy necessary for everyday functioning. Nutrients are chemical compounds found in food. Some of them cannot be produced by the body and must be obtained through food. These are known as essential nutrients and include vitamins, minerals, fatty acids and some amino acids. In contrast, non-essential nutrients can be synthesized within the body. Nutrients are also classified based on the amounts required: macronutrients are needed by the body in larger amounts, whereas micronutrients are required in much smaller amounts. A deficiency of nutrients may result in the development of specific symptoms or disorders. Excessive intake of macronutrients can lead to obesity and related conditions, while excessive intake of micronutrients may be toxic to the body. For these reasons, it is important to maintain a balanced diet. Carbohydrates, fats and proteins are macronutrients that provides energy to the body, which is quantified in kilojoules (kJ) or kilocalories (kcal). According to EFSA, the recommended proportion of carbohydrates and fats in the diet, as well as the Population Reference Intake (PRI) for protein for a healthy population over 18 years of age, are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Reference Intake (RI) range for carbohydrates, fats and proteins with Population Reference Intake (PRI) for proteins for healthy population older than 18 years

Macronutrient	Reference Intake range
Carbohydrates	45 - 60 % of total daily energy intake
Fats	20 – 35 % of total daily energy intake
Proteins	20 % of total daily energy intake or 0.83 g/kg of body weight

Water is often considered a fourth macronutrient because the body needs it in large quantities for survival, acting as a solvent, temperature regulator, and transport medium for nutrients. However, unlike proteins, carbohydrates and fats, it provides no energy. Proper hydration involves regular fluid intake and appropriate fluid choices. Water, as well as unsweetened herbal teas, represents the best option; however, beverages such as milk and dairy products, as well as foods—primarily fresh fruits and vegetables—also contribute to total water intake.

Water intake requirements are individual and depend on age, gender, season, and amount of physical activity. According to EFSA (2010), the average recommended daily intake is approximately 2 L for women and 2.5 L for men. With increased physical activity, fluid requirements rise by 400–800 mL per hour of activity (exercise or physical labor).

The global increase in the consumption of high-calorie beverages has highlighted the crucial role of water and other unsweetened beverages in supporting health and reducing disease risk. Sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, sweetened fruit beverages, sport drinks and energy drinks are major sources of added sugars like sucrose and high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). These beverages provide large amounts of calories without significant nutrients, often referred to as “empty calories”, with the exception of 100% fruit juice or freshly squeezed juice. Along with sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages represent the most significant source of added sugar in Western diets, making their consumption a major contributing factor to the development of overweight and obesity among both children and adults (Nguyen et al., 2023). Consuming half a liter of a carbonated soft drink provides approximately 50 g of sugar, which is equivalent to about ten sugar packets typically served with coffee, and contributes roughly 200 kcal of energy.

4.2 Healthy dietary patterns

Healthy dietary patterns can generally be described as those in which nutrient-dense foods are consumed in significant amounts. This usually includes a large proportion of plant-based foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, plant-derived fats, fish and fermented dairy products. These foods provide important anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds that help protect the body against stress-related damage which can contribute to the onset of various diseases.

Healthy dietary patterns naturally exist in certain parts of the world, where they are closely tied to local traditions and rely on regionally available foods, as seen in traditional Mediterranean or some Asian diets. Research has shown that these diets provide significant health benefits through their nutrient composition and related health outcomes. However, in recent years, adherence to these dietary patterns has declined, particularly in countries traditionally associated with the Mediterranean diet and among younger populations. Recent scientific evidence highlights the importance of developing strategies to promote adherence to the Mediterranean diet among adolescents and young adults in university settings, where education and access to information through courses and lectures can play a key role. Greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet has been linked to lower rates of suicidal behavior, emotional difficulties, and compulsive internet use, accounting for 7.7% of the variance according to Tomás-Gallego et al. (2025). It is therefore recommended to incorporate regular nutrition courses into the academic curriculum, complemented by postgraduate lectures and awareness campaigns that encourage the consumption of various food groups, as well as strategies promoting fruit and vegetable intake within the university environment, tailored to the cultural context of each population.

Given that university cafeterias serve a large number of students, implementing policies to improve the quality of food offered in these canteens is essential (Antonopoulou et al., 2025).

4.3 Meal frequency and timing

Currently, scientific literature presents numerous conflicting findings regarding the optimal distribution of meals throughout the day. In Western culture, it is generally recommended to distribute total energy intake across 3 main meals, including 2 to 3 smaller snacks that help maintain stable blood glucose levels and thereby prevent excessive food consumption. While the health benefits of fasting have long been recognized, primarily in religious contexts, a growing body of research is investing how different forms of fasting affect body measurements and physiological functions, even when total energy intake remains the same. Intermittent fasting, which involves avoiding food intake for a minimum of 12 up to 16 to 18 hours, is often applied among the general population. Individuals frequently choose their eating window based on personal preferences and habits (so-called “morning” and “evening” types), thereby concentrating daily energy intake in either the morning or afternoon/evening. For the student population, which is exposed to considerable physical and mental demands associated with academic obligations, abstaining from food for such prolonged periods may result in fatigue, weakness, and an inability to perform normal daily tasks. Therefore, extended fasting is not recommended for this group.

The current scientific consensus on the recommended number and distribution of meals can be summarized as follows:

- **Do not skip breakfast.** Consuming a greater share of daily calories earlier in the day, rather than in the evening, is linked to several physiological benefits.
- **Lengthening the daily fasting period beyond the usual overnight fast or adopting intermittent fasting can provide health benefits, particularly in terms of weight management and the regulation of blood glucose and insulin levels.** To combine these approaches effectively, it is suggested that food consumption be concentrated between breakfast and mid- to late-afternoon (Paoli et al., 2019).

4.4 Meal composition – The healthy plate model

Meal composition is often arbitrary, based on taste preferences, without consideration of the nutritional and energy content of foods. Despite the reintroduction of the pyramid-like-graphic into dietary guidelines (US Department of Agriculture, 2025), simple visual models such as the healthy plate model introduced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2011, remains a simple visual tool for illustrating optimal meal composition (Figure 2). A healthy plate includes foods from different food groups and illustrates their optimal proportions to meet daily nutrient intake recommendations. The plate model emphasizes that all consumed foods are important, highlighting the need to focus on variety, portion size, and nutrient density. Key messages can be summarized as follows:

- **Dietary changes are a lifelong decision**, not a short-term regimen. Therefore, healthy eating recommendations should be individualized to ensure long-term adherence.
- **Meals should be based on non-starchy vegetables**, with seasonal vegetables constituting half of the plate at main meals (lunch and dinner).
- **Fresh fruit should be the preferred source of dietary sugars**. Daily consumption of up to 500 g of fruit is recommended, distributed across three servings: one at breakfast and one in each snack.
- **Starchy sides should preferably include whole grains** (for example oatmeal, millet, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, rice) and starchy vegetables (beans, peas, chickpeas, lentils, potatoes, sweet potatoes), rather than processed foods (bread, pastries, pasta, dumplings, gnocchi, etc.). Starchy sides should constitute one-quarter of the plate.
- **Protein sources should also occupy one-quarter of the plate**. Recommended sources include lean poultry, fish, lean red meat, eggs, low-fat fresh cheese, or plant-based proteins (for example, lentil patties or other legumes).
- **When selecting dairy products** (milk and fermented dairy), low-fat options (1.5–2.8% milk fat) should be preferred (USDA, 2011).

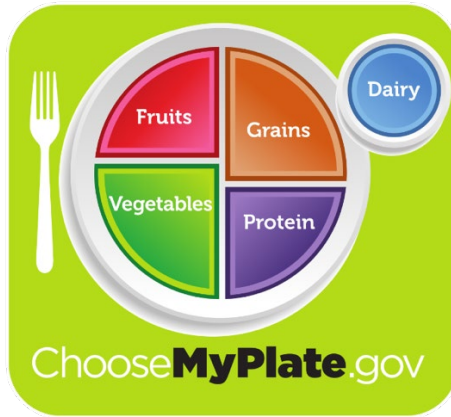


Figure 2: Illustration of the healthy plate model, adopted from USDA (2011).

5 Practical recommendations for proper nutrition in university setting

The basics of proper nutrition in an university setting can be presented as simple tips that university students can understand and apply in everyday life.

These include:

- Eat a balanced breakfast. Consuming a nutritionally balanced breakfast is important for maintaining energy levels throughout the day, increasing metabolic rate, regulating appetite and stabilizing blood glucose levels. Skipping breakfast has been associated with lethargy, impaired concentration, increased cravings for energy-dense foods and late-night snacking.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand, such as yogurt, fresh fruit, and nuts. Having nutritious snacks readily available helps reduce the temptation to consume less nutritious foods when hunger occurs. Regular snacking between meals can help maintain energy levels, support cognitive function, and stabilize blood glucose levels.
- Stay hydrated. Adequate hydration is essential for preventing dehydration-related symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, impaired concentration, and dizziness. Students are encouraged to carry a reusable water bottle and drink water regularly throughout the day. High intakes of beverages such as coffee, sugary sodas, fruit juices, and energy drinks should be limited, as they often contain added sugars and calories and do not hydrate as effectively as water.

- Limit the intake of added sugars. Excessive consumption of added sugars has been associated with weight gain, reduced energy levels, impaired glycemic control, and potential hormonal imbalances. Added sugars are commonly found in processed snack foods and sugar-sweetened beverages. Hidden sources of added sugars are also present in foods often perceived as healthy, such as flavored yogurts, instant oatmeal, and granola bars. Developing the habit of reading ingredient labels can help identify added sugars. Whenever possible, sweetened drinks and snacks should be replaced with unsweetened alternatives, while natural sources such as fresh fruit can be used to satisfy sweet cravings.
- When living in a dormitory, preparing meals in advance, such as batch cooking for the week, helps ensure regular consumption of balanced meals during busy academic schedules. Additionally, purchasing pre-cooked or pre-cut foods can save time and facilitate healthier food choices.
- When dining at the university canteen, students are encouraged to select healthier options and customize meals to meet individual nutritional needs. Practical strategies include choosing grilled or baked meats instead of fried options, adding a side salad to meals and practicing portion control by filling approximately half of the plate with vegetables, while allocating the remaining space to high-fiber carbohydrates and a source of lean protein. Incorporating a variety of colorful vegetables can enhance nutrient intake. Dishes prepared with creamy or high-fat sauces should be limited. Water or unsweetened herbal tea is recommended over sugar-sweetened beverages, while fresh fruit juice may be consumed occasionally as a substitute for whole fruit.

6 Conclusion

Adolescent and early adulthood represent a critical period for establishing long-lasting dietary habits that significantly impact health throughout life. Despite increased nutritional needs during this stage, many young people exhibit inadequate dietary patterns, which can lead to both undernutrition and overweight, consequently increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases. The transition to university life further complicates this situation due to the new challenges of independently managing dietary behaviors, exposure to social and economic influences and limited nutrition-related knowledge. The development and implementation of educational programs, user-friendly tools for students and

supportive food environments within universities are essential to promote sustainable healthy eating habits. Applying these strategies can improve students' nutritional status, reduce prevalence of overweight and obesity and enhance the long-term health outcomes of young adults.

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OBSESITY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE MALE BODY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

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Locating representations of the male body in literature has traditionally proven more difficult than tracing representations of the female body, which have been extensively theorized since the emergence of feminist criticism in the 1970s. This paper examines the representation of the obese male body in contemporary American literature, focusing on Louis Gallo's long poem "Fat Man at the Aquarium" alongside Raymond Carver's short story "Fat." While obesity is frequently framed within cultural discourse as abnormal or aberrant, this study explores how literary form mediates such judgments. Through a comparative analysis, the paper argues that Carver's minimalist narrative contains bodily difference through restraint and exteriorization, whereas Gallo's poem radicalizes the gaze, transforming the obese male body into a site of anxiety, projection, and symbolic violence. Read together, these texts illuminate how regimes of bodily normativity shape the visibility, interpretation, and dehumanization of the obese male body in modern American culture.

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1 Introduction

Locating the theme of the male body in literature has traditionally been more difficult than tracing representations of the female body. Since the emergence of feminist criticism in the 1970s in the United States and its subsequent development, the female body – long neglected, repressed, or idealized – has been vigorously reclaimed as a central object of scholarly inquiry. By contrast, the male body and masculinity more broadly have often remained unmarked, functioning as the normative and therefore invisible standard against which other bodies are measured. As Sean Nixon observes, much early literary and cultural criticism concerned with masculinity focused primarily on “the negative effects of dominant definitions of masculinity on women’s relationship with men in both the public and private worlds” (Nixon 1997: 296), rather than on masculinity as a condition in its own right. Consequently, even when bodies are problematized in literary criticism, they are most often female bodies, while male embodiment continues to operate as an unmarked category.

This imbalance is particularly evident in critical discussions of fatness and obesity in literature, where the female body has been more frequently scrutinized, pathologized, and symbolically charged. In his essay “American Fat: Obesity and the Short Story,” Lionel Kelly analyzes four short stories united by their exploration of the relationship between obesity and sexuality. Significantly, three of the four protagonists he examines are female. The only exception is “Fat” by Raymond Carver, which centers on an obese male figure, yet even there the male body remains externally focalized and deprived of narrative interiority. The scarcity of critical attention to the obese male body thus mirrors a broader tendency to treat masculinity as a default, rather than as a historically and culturally contingent embodied position.

Against this critical backdrop, the present chapter analyzes representations of the fat male body in American literature through a comparative reading of the long poem “Fat Man at the Aquarium” by Louis Gallo¹ and Carver’s² short story “Fat.” While Carver’s minimalist narrative stages obesity as an object of quiet scrutiny and

¹ Louis Gallo has published numerous poetry collections, has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations, and is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant for fiction. He is professor emeritus at Radford University.

² Raymond Carver (1938–1988) was an influential American short-story writer and poet, closely associated with literary minimalism and known for his restrained depiction of everyday life and marginality.

subdued fascination, Gallo's poem radicalizes the gaze, transforming bodily deviation into a site of anxiety, misrecognition, and symbolic violence. Read together, these texts illuminate how the fat male body is rendered visible, judged, and ultimately destabilized within contemporary regimes of bodily normativity. By focusing on the male obese body as a representational problem rather than a medical condition, this chapter seeks to contribute to ongoing debates about male bodies, masculinity, and the cultural politics of obesity in modern literature. I will first outline theoretical approaches to bodily normativity, then analyze Carver's narrative containment of obesity, and finally Gallo's escalation of the gaze into symbolic violence.

2 Normativity, Masculinity, and the Obese Body

Discourses of the body in contemporary society are governed by an imperative of normativity, through which bodily difference is continuously measured, ranked, and evaluated. There is a persistent urge toward "normalcy," and the normal today is frequently equated with perfection. Individuals are expected to exercise, monitor their weight, and track cholesterol levels; within this framework, the normal or ideal body is certainly not fat. Lennard J. Davis explains that at one point in history the average became a kind of ideal, standing in opposition to an earlier belief in which only a divine body functioned as the ideal. As Davis points out, "the concept of a norm ... implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm" (Davis 1995: 29). This idea, however, no longer adequately accounts for contemporary bodily ideals. Instead, as Davis argues, a new model has emerged – an ideal of ranked order – "powered by the imperative of the norm, and then supplemented by the notion of progress, human perfectibility, and the elimination of deviance, to create a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be" (Davis 1995: 35).

Moreover, the image of the modern body is produced and reinforced through media, whether literary or visual. While contemporary culture applies these bodily norms to both female and male bodies, I will focus on the representation of the male body in American literature, a field that has received comparatively less critical attention. Conceptions of the male body have, of course, shifted historically. In her work on representations of the fat male body, Ann Mikkelsen notes that "while fat men early in the nineteenth century could be prominent and admired, 'protective and reassuring' members of society, their days as representative citizens were numbered"

(Mikkelsen 2003: 111). She further observes that by the 1920s, Americans began dieting in large numbers, following new fads in an effort to counteract overconsumption and disease (Mikkelsen 2003: 111). During this period, the term *fat* increasingly acquired negative connotations.³ As a result, the modern male body must be understood as “the product of an American society in which masculinity was an extremely fraught and contested cultural site” (Mikkelsen 2003: 106).

Mid-twentieth-century cultural icons such as James Dean, particularly in the movie *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), contributed significantly to reshaping the image of the modern man. Along with figures such as Marlon Brando, Dean embodied a new visual ideal of masculinity that later persisted through advertising campaigns – most notably Levi’s jeans, the Marlboro Man, and Calvin Klein models. Many cultural critics have identified this shift as a sexualization of the male body. As Sean Nixon observes, “a foregrounding of similar physical characteristics (the developed arm and chest muscles), together with highly groomed hair and skin, also figured in the range of male pin-ups featured on posters, postcards and greetings cards...” (Nixon 1997: 294). In American society, this visual regime has intensified to the point where bodily perfection – defined by leanness, muscular definition, and flawless appearance – has become an implicit requirement. As Maud Ellmann observes in her essay “Eating, Obesity and Literature,” in the United States “the ‘war on fat’ dominates the media, with doctors and politicians constantly exhorting us to eat less and move more” (Ellmann 2015: 59).

In the twenty-first century, however, these visual norms are no longer disseminated primarily through film, print advertising, or literature alone, but through social media platforms, where the ideal male body is continuously produced, circulated, and evaluated. Social media intensifies the imperative of bodily normalcy by transforming the gaze into a participatory and measurable practice: bodies are not only seen, but ranked, liked, followed, and algorithmically rewarded. Within this environment, the male body becomes a project of permanent self-optimization, while bodies that deviate from the dominant aesthetic – particularly obese bodies – are rendered hyper-visible as failures of discipline, control, and masculinity.

³ The term *fat* is used here in an analytical and historical sense, reflecting its circulation within both the primary literary texts by both Carver and Gallo, and the critical discourse under discussion. While the term has acquired increasingly negative connotations within modern medical, aesthetic, and moral frameworks, its retention here serves to foreground the cultural work performed by bodily naming rather than to adopt euphemistic or strictly medicalized alternatives such as *overweight* or *obese*.

Against this visual economy, the tradition of idealized masculinity has not disappeared but has instead intensified and diversified. Contemporary figures such as David Beckham, whose athletic body circulated extensively through fashion campaigns and lifestyle branding, and Chris Hemsworth, whose hyper-muscular physique exemplifies contemporary fitness and superhero aesthetics, represent forms of masculinity defined by visible discipline, bodily optimization, and permanent display. Circulated through advertising and, increasingly, through social media, such bodies function as normative templates against which other male bodies – particularly obese ones – are rendered deficient, excessive, or unintelligible.

The only context in which contemporary culture appears to tolerate the fat male body is comedy.⁴ One may consider the actor John Candy, whose fatness remained a stable, non-transitional feature of his comic persona rather than a condition framed through narratives of bodily correction or transformation. In contemporary popular culture, figures such as Jack Black continue this tradition, in which the fat male body is rendered socially acceptable through excess, humor, and self-parody, rather than through normalization. By contrast, the public reception of Jonah Hill reveals the conditional nature of this acceptance, insofar as fatness is tolerated only when embedded in narratives of comic vulnerability, arrested development, or eventual bodily transformation.

Despite the pervasive cultural imperative toward bodily ideality, statistical data indicate that a substantial proportion of the population remains overweight. As Lionel Kelly notes, within medical discourse obesity in contemporary America is commonly attributed to sedentary lifestyles, excessive consumption, and the widespread availability of inexpensive, highly palatable food, even as it may signify either wealth or poverty in individual cases (Kelly 2001: 218). Yet the prevalence of overweight bodies has not resulted in their cultural normalization. On the contrary, within societies structured by norms of bodily discipline and self-control, obese individuals are frequently rendered socially unacceptable or implicitly inferior. As Kelly observes, “bearing in mind the norms of physical well-being as these are socially construed, the obese figure ... is commonly represented as the abnormal and aberrant” (Kelly 2001: 219).

⁴ Additionally, Ellmann has observed, the fat body may also find conditional acceptance within certain marginal genres of pornography, where excess becomes eroticized through prohibition. As she notes, “like other secret vices, however, fat and gluttony have gained a new allure by virtue of their prohibition” (Ellmann 2015: 60).

While Kelly's discussion is grounded in an American context, the stigmatization of obesity operates more broadly across contemporary Western societies, where similar regimes of bodily surveillance, aesthetic regulation, and moralized health prevail through media, medicine, and popular culture. Within such contexts, obesity functions not merely as a physical condition but as a culturally charged marker of deviation, failure, and excess. At the same time, the American context remains particularly revealing due to its global cultural influence and its central role in producing and exporting visual ideals of masculinity. Literary representations emerging from this context therefore offer a concentrated view of how obesity becomes marked as deviance, excess, and social threat. It is this representational logic – rather than medical causality – that informs the literary constructions of the fat male body examined in the analyses that follow.

3 Representing the Obese Male Body: From Narrative Containment to Symbolic Violence

In the short story "Fat" by Raymond Carver, first published in 1976, the obese male body is rendered visible within everyday social interaction, yet carefully neutralized through narrative restraint, external focalization, and the absence of overt moral judgment. The narrative follows a young waitress working in a diner, whose attention is repeatedly drawn to the physical presence of an obese male customer, whom she describes as "the fattest person I have ever seen" (Carver 1992: 3). Crucially, however, the fat male body is not granted narrative interiority; instead, it is mediated entirely through another's perspective, which fixates on bodily details such as the man's excessively fat fingers, described as "long, thick, creamy fingers" – details registered with a mixture of fascination and unease.

As Maud Ellmann observes, these particularities appear "more teat-like than phallic," suggesting something "feminine" rather than conventionally masculine (Ellmann 2015: 67). Such a description resonates with a broader cultural association that links obese male bodies to asexuality or even impotence. This, in turn, recalls Freud's notion of sexuality in relation to normalcy. As Lennard J. Davis summarizes Freud's position, "if the *vita sexualis* is normal, there can be no neurosis" (Davis 1992: 39). Rather than functioning as a causal explanation, this logic reflects a cultural fantasy in which bodily normativity and sexual normativity are imagined as mutually reinforcing: if the fat man had a "normal" psychosexual development, he

would not be fat, and because he is fat, he is presumed not to enjoy a “normal” sexuality.

In this sense, obesity becomes legible not merely as a physical condition but as a signifier of psychological, moral, or social failure. In his essay “Disease and Anti-naturalism in Raymond Carver’s “Fat” and “A Small, Good Thing” and David Lynch’s *Blue Velvet*,” David Roche similarly connects obesity to disease, arguing that in Carver’s story “physical disease operates mainly as a metaphor for mental, moral and even social ills” (Roche 2006: 160).

Carver’s story thus exemplifies a representational mode in which the obese male body, when it appears in literature, is rendered primarily as an object of the gaze rather than as a speaking or self-interpreting subject. Although the waitress herself remains relatively neutral and approaches the man with curiosity—at one point even telling him that she likes “to see a man eat and enjoy himself” (Carver 1992: 5) – this attitude is not shared by the other staff members in the diner. Their reactions are marked by ridicule, as they refer to the customer as “a fatty,” “an old tub-of-guts,” or “a fat man from the circus.” As Ellmann notes, “the chorus of mockery serves to distance and dehumanize the fat man, but also indicates excited interest: the fat man causes a stir in what is evidently a tedious routine. The name-calling is an attempt to keep the fat man in his place, to prevent his fat from overflowing and engulfing his observers” (Ellmann 2015: 67).

To this group, the fat man appears abnormal, even threatening, particularly in moments of physical closeness. Another waitress, Harriet, warns the narrator: “He’s going to run your legs off” (Carver 1992: 5). Roche characterizes such a body that fails to conform to dominant norms as a “foreign body” (Roche 2006: 161). This process of marking bodily difference recalls Judith Butler’s argument that the human body is fashioned by norms articulated through multiple discourses. As Butler explains, “sex’ as an imperative in this way means that a subject is addressed and produced by such a norm, and that this norm—and the regulatory power of which it is a token—materializes bodies as an effect of that injunction” (Butler 1993: 187). In Carver’s story, these regulatory norms are not dramatized through overt conflict or symbolic excess but are instead mediated through a restrained narrative form that limits their representational impact.

Carver's minimalist narrative style plays a crucial role in containing the representational force of the obese male body. By resisting metaphorical excess, psychological speculation, or symbolic inflation, the text limits the range of meanings that can be projected onto the fat man's body. Obesity remains conspicuous, but it is not transformed into an allegory or moral spectacle. This aesthetic restraint produces a form of ethical containment: the fat male body is subjected to scrutiny and social regulation, yet it is not driven toward narrative catastrophe or symbolic annihilation. In this way, "Fat" exemplifies a mode of representation in which bodily difference is acknowledged and managed, rather than violently expelled – a mode that will be radically destabilized in Louis Gallo's long poem "Fat Man at the Aquarium."

"Fat Man at the Aquarium" consists of five parts and situates the reader in an aquarium in New Orleans, which the speaker visits together with his family. The family includes his seventy-five-year-old mother, his wife Cathy, and two daughters, Claire and Maddie. Immediately upon stepping out of their car, they encounter a man and his companion. Gallo introduces this figure simply and insistently as fat. His first portrayal of the fat man reads: "The man is behemoth, at least four feet wide, / and supports himself on titanium canes / which I'm guessing will snap at any moment..." (Gallo 2020: 73). Similar descriptions recur throughout the poem – "that bounty of flesh, / the fragile heart flapping inside like butterfly wings, / reports of epidemic heat strokes" – formulated in an intensely ironic and often sarcastic tone.

Although there is no direct interaction between the family and the fat man or his companion at this point, the reader is immediately confronted with the speaker's irritation at the man's presence. The speaker cannot understand "why a human boulder would want to venture out [...]" (Gallo 2020: 73), even though he himself and his entire family are "out there." Given the language used to describe the fat man, the speaker's dislike – and even disgust – appears to stem solely from his contemptuous perception of the man's body. Inside the aquarium, as the family observes various sea animals, "from nowhere, the fat man appears" (Gallo 2020: 74). The speaker exaggerates his panicked response: "But he's too close / to the girls, to Cathy. I don't want him there, in the videos, / in our memories" (Gallo 2020: 74). The fat man's proximity is experienced as a threat to the speaker's family, despite the absence of any concrete action, producing a sense of unease that closely recalls

Carver's depiction of bodily closeness as inherently disruptive, where the obese male body is perceived as potentially dangerous simply by occupying shared space.

In response to this perceived threat, the family withdraws into another room, attempting to reestablish distance and regain a sense of control, eventually settling in McDonald's. They eat hamburgers and French fries, and the speaker suddenly reflects: "McDonald's! We could be in China" (Gallo 2020: 77). Alongside this reference, the poem includes other recognizable markers of American consumer culture: popcorn, Milky Way, Pepsi. Their presence in McDonald's is ostensibly motivated by hunger and convenience. Yet when "the fat man and his consort arrive" (Gallo 2020: 77), the speaker's wife also becomes irritated by their presence. When the fat man begins to eat, the speaker re-describes the same type of food the family has just consumed as "a tray stacked with heavy, oily burgers. / No glandular distress here, just basic gluttony" (Gallo 2020: 77). The speaker's attitude is openly judgmental, and his depiction of the fat man grows increasingly grotesque: "The fat man tears off a paper wrapper and consumes half the sandwich / in a single bite... He seems rhapsodic, / closes his eyes and daven as he chews, spittle and bits of food inching down his chin" (Gallo 2020: 77). The insistence on "consumes" rather than *eats* reinforces an exaggerated and dehumanizing portrayal, a strategy that sharply intensifies a logic already present in Carver's story, where eating likewise becomes a site of scrutiny and ridicule. In Carver, this dehumanization is articulated through a collective mechanism of derision that distances the fat man from social normativity, even as his brief appeal to the collective "we" registers as a limited and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to resist that process.

The speaker's condemnation of the fat man's eating in Gallo's poem is particularly revealing given that the family has just *consumed* the same food moments earlier. This asymmetry exposes the instability of moral judgment under regimes of bodily normativity, where identical actions acquire radically different meanings depending on the body that performs them. In this sense, obesity functions as a visual and moral filter through which ordinary behaviors are recorded as excessive, obscene, or threatening. The fat man's body thus becomes the site onto which broader anxieties about consumption, self-control, and social order are projected, allowing the speaker to externalize his own participation in the very practices he condemns. What is at stake here is not food itself, but the visibility of bodily excess, which transforms eating into a spectacle of moral failure when performed by the obese body. Gallo's

poem therefore stages not simply personal prejudice, but the operation of a wider cultural logic in which bodily form determines ethical meaning.

This judgment does not remain confined to the fat man's body; rather, it extends to his companion, whose presence is likewise interpreted through the speaker's normative assumptions. He assumes that the woman accompanying him must be either his sister or caretaker: "I also know the woman with the fat man is not his mother or wife. / Sister maybe, his last linkage with that easy, wondrous realm of women" (Gallo 2020: 75). This preconception stands in stark contrast to the speaker's own situation, which he earlier presents with pride: "[...] my family / which has come to consist solely of women" (Gallo 2020: 73). As in Carver's "Fat," obesity is implicitly associated with asexuality: the fat man is imagined as incapable of being a husband or romantic partner. Gallo thus reinforces a cultural notion in which the obese male body is positioned outside normative sexuality.

In addition to the human body, Gallo's poem presents a series of animal bodies. While the fat man's body is repeatedly framed as excessive and unacceptable, the bodies of sea animals are consistently rendered as pleasurable to observe. Each species is described as admirable, powerful, or charming. Sharks, though not beautiful, are depicted as bestial and therefore respected; tortoises are "ancient as the earth itself" (Gallo 2020: 74), a quality the speaker appears to admire; penguins are "tuxedoed clowns" (Gallo 2020: 75). The most elaborate description is reserved for a jellyfish, portrayed as "a sole, flamboyant jelly-fish: translucent, a fanfare of silken [...] ethereal, sovereign, majestically alone..." (Gallo 2020: 75). In this visual imagery, animal bodies are rendered pleasurable, while the fat man's body fails to find a place.

The only moment of partial alignment occurs when the speaker compares the fat man to a whale. This comparison is paradoxical: although the speaker accepts other sea creatures, the whale – like the fat man – is rejected. At one point, the speaker even exclaims, "*Get out of my ocean!*" (Gallo 2020: 76), a possessive gesture that reveals a fantasy of territorial ownership. This projection invites the reader to question what the speaker seeks to protect or conceal. As David William Foster notes, the body often functions "as a metonym for social issues" (Foster 1994: 320). The whale metaphor extends further when the speaker imagines his lost daughter "*riding one of the sea horses, lassoing a sardine or two*" (Gallo 2020: 76), while the whale remains a

disturbing presence. Like whales, the fat man cannot abandon his environment; his very existence disrupts the normative order.

Although the poem unfolds within an aquarium, the speaker rarely engages fully with this environment, continually redirecting attention back to the fat man and compelling the reader to follow. The speaker's gaze becomes obsessive. Drawing on Freudian theory, this dynamic may be understood through the lens of scopophilia. As Laura Mulvey explains, "scopophilic [aspect] arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight" (Mulvey 2009: 20). In Gallo's poem, however, the gaze produces not pleasure but disgust, revealing scopophilia stripped of erotic reward and reconfigured as a mechanism of surveillance and control. The spectator continues to look, yet derives no satisfaction – a dynamic that may be described as anti-scopophilia. In this configuration, looking functions not as a source of pleasure but as a compulsive act of monitoring, through which bodily difference is repeatedly confirmed, judged, and rendered intolerable. The fat man is constructed as object, destabilizing the speaker's sense of the ordinary.

This destabilization culminates in the speaker's perception of the situation as dreamlike. The images become "archetypal omens torpedoed out of some dream" (Gallo 2020: 77), yet the speaker remains unable to interpret them: "But what dream? What do they represent? / Signs, a universe of signs: sharks, jellyfish, sardines [...] the fat man" (Gallo 2020: 77). Carl Gustav Jung suggests that works of art draw upon the "collective unconscious," whose archetypal images possess intense emotional force but require interpretation (Jung 2001: 1000–1001). The speaker, however, is "at a loss to translate" (Gallo 2020: 77), and Jung himself reminds us that such figures "still have to be translated into conceptual language" (Jung 2001: 1001).

Unable to make sense of these signs, the speaker ultimately imagines killing the fat man in the aquarium gift shop. He lists an escalating series of justifications for the act – ranging from moral outrage to bodily disgust – in a frantic accumulation of accusations:

I kill him for abducting my lost daughter, for / mayhem of spirit, for lack of
equipoise, for getting too close / to Cathy, Maddie and Claire, for the obscenity of
his being, for enslaving his sister, / caretaker or whatever [...] I kill him for imposing
his severity into our memories, / for sweating too much, for leaving the death bed

to visit an aquarium, / for devouring the world, for diving into a tank of sharks, / for strangling the jelly fish with his swollen fingers, for loitering / near female bathrooms . . . I kill him for all of us, for the world, / for justice and peace of mind, for atonement (Gallo 2020: 79).

Yet this symbolic act of violence ultimately fails. The fat man does not die; instead, “he grows fatter” (Gallo 2020: 79), exposing the futility of attempting to eradicate bodily deviance through projection or destruction. The excessiveness of this catalogue is crucial. The speaker’s justifications move rapidly from imagined personal threat (“getting too close to Cathy, / Maddie and Claire”) to moral judgment (“the obscenity of his being”), from bodily processes (“sweating too much”) to grandiose abstractions (“for the world, for justice / and peace of mind”). In this way, the fat man becomes a repository for heterogeneous anxieties that far exceed any plausible individual action. What the list stages is not causality but accumulation: each charge reinforces the previous one, producing a logic in which bodily excess is conflated with moral, social, and even cosmic disorder. The fantasy of murder thus emerges as an attempt to restore coherence and control in the face of a body that resists interpretation and containment. Importantly, the speaker frames the act as collective and altruistic – “for all of us” – thereby converting private disgust into a purportedly universal ethical imperative. Symbolic violence is here legitimized through appeal to normativity itself, revealing how the obese body is constructed not merely as undesirable, but as a threat whose eradication appears, within this distorted logic, both necessary and justifiable.

4 Conclusion

To conclude, representations of the obese male body in American literature reveal a persistent tension between visibility, normativity, and control, a tension that culminates most violently in Gallo’s “Fat Man at the Aquarium.” Considered within the broader cultural and theoretical context outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the motives for this symbolic violence may be understood as threefold: first, the speaker’s inability to accept the fat man’s appearance within a culture governed by ideals of bodily perfection; second, the failure of scopophilic desire, in which the act of looking produces not pleasure but anxiety and disgust; and third, the speaker’s incapacity to translate the archetypal figures that overwhelm him – an incapacity he himself acknowledges when he confesses to have misread the omens. What emerges

here is not a singular motivation but a convergence of cultural pressures that render bodily difference unreadable except through fear, projection, and moralization.

As David William Foster suggests, literary representations of the body often function as sites where “the relationship between one’s body and one’s perceptions of it, ranging from inner spiritual feelings to various forms of self-contemplation,” are exposed (Foster 1994: 320). In Gallo’s poem, the speaker does arrive at a moment of self-contemplation, yet this moment is defined less by insight than by failure. His reflection serves only to register his inability to reconcile bodily difference with normative expectations. In his pursuit of an “ideal normalcy,” the speaker fails – fails to interpret the signs before him, fails to contain his anxiety, and ultimately fails to destroy what he perceives as disturbing or threatening. This failure is not merely personal, but symptomatic of a broader cultural logic that demands bodily conformity while offering no stable framework for engaging with deviation.

Read in relation to the short story “Fat,” this failure becomes particularly revealing. Where Carver’s minimalist narrative contains the obese male body through restraint and ethical distance, Gallo’s poem dramatizes the consequences of excess: the escalation of the gaze into obsession, the transformation of difference into threat, and the fantasy of eradication as a solution to discomfort. Yet even this fantasy collapses. The fat man does not die; instead, he “grows fatter,” underscoring the futility of symbolic violence as a response to bodily deviance and the persistence of the body as that which resists narrative and moral closure.

Taken together, these texts illuminate how the obese male body in American literature functions as a site of cultural tension, where norms of masculinity, visibility, and control are both enforced and undone. Rather than offering resolution, both works expose the instability of bodily normativity itself, suggesting that what appears excessive or aberrant cannot ultimately be expelled, but only repeatedly misrecognized within cultural frameworks that seek to discipline the body while remaining unable to accommodate its difference. In this sense, literary representations of obesity do not simply reflect social attitudes, but actively interrogate the limits of normative thinking itself.

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SUSTAINABILITY TRANSLATION AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSLATION: FOUNDATIONS FOR A DUAL FRAMEWORK IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

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The growing prominence of sustainability across scientific, political, and corporate domains has intensified the need for multilingual communication, positioning translation as a key mediator of global environmental discourse. Yet the relationship between translation and sustainability remains conceptually unclear, with overlapping terms such as *ecotranslation*, *ecotranslatology*, *green translation*, *sustainable translation*, and *translation for sustainability*. This chapter addresses this gap by proposing a dual framework that distinguishes two complementary concepts. Sustainability translation is defined as a type of specialized translation involving texts in environmental science, climate policy, renewable energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development. Drawing on genre-based approaches to LSP translation, we outline the textual, terminological, and interdisciplinary features of these genres and the competences required of translators. Sustainable translation, by contrast, concerns environmentally responsible and ethically grounded translation practice, examining digital infrastructures, AI technologies, and resource-efficient workflows. Together, these perspectives clarify a fragmented conceptual field and support the development of future research, training, and professional standards.

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1 Introduction

Environmental sustainability has intensified multilingual communication across scientific, political, economic, and social arenas, positioning translation as a central mediator of the green transition. Yet the conceptual terrain remains fragmented: terms such as *ecotranslation*, *ecotranslatology*, *green translation*, *sustainable translation*, and *translation for sustainability* are frequently used interchangeably, obscuring the distinct roles translation plays within sustainability discourse.

To resolve this ambiguity, we introduce a dual framework that defines two complementary concepts: sustainability translation, understood as the specialized translation of texts relating to environmental science, climate policy, renewable energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development; and sustainable translation, understood as an ethically grounded, environmentally responsible orientation to translation practice, research, and pedagogy. This distinction builds on ecological perspectives in language and translation—ecolinguistics (Halliday 1990; Stibbe 2020) and ecotranslatology (Hu 2020)—and aligns with reflections on translation in the Anthropocene (Cronin 2017), while clarifying that *translation about sustainability* and *translation performed sustainably* are analytically distinct.

We proceed in two movements. First, we introduce and define sustainability translation as a type of specialized translation shaped by genres, communicative purposes, and registers (Dejica 2020, 2026). We outline the textual and terminological features of sustainability-related documents, identify the interdisciplinary competences required of translators, and situate the field within the broader evolution of LSP translation. Second, we articulate sustainable translation as a methodological paradigm concerned with the environmental, ethical, and sociotechnical conditions under which translation is conducted—digital infrastructures and cloud platforms, machine-assisted and AI-enhanced tools, data governance, and resource-efficient workflows and pedagogies (Cronin 2017). Bringing these perspectives together, we offer conceptual clarity and operational guidance for research agendas, curricular design, and professional standards, supporting the consolidation of an emerging scholarly and professional domain.

2 Sustainability Translation

The expansion of environmental discourse has generated a distinct constellation of texts whose primary function is to articulate, regulate, and promote sustainability. In line with genre-based approaches to LSP translation (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993; Dejica 2020; Trosborg 2000), sustainability translation is seen here as a type of specialized translation best understood through the genres that constitute it—international climate agreements and adaptation strategies, environmental impact assessments, renewable-energy documentation, circular-economy protocols, biodiversity conservation plans, and corporate sustainability/ESG reporting. These genres are highly terminological, often multimodal, and embedded in institutional frameworks; they address specialized audiences ranging from policymakers and scientists to engineers, investors, NGOs, and the public. Their hybrid character—mixing scientific evidence, regulatory requirements, technical specifications, and advocacy—demands translators who combine linguistic and cultural expertise with genre awareness and domain knowledge, and who can navigate scientific, legal, technical, economic, and persuasive registers without compromising accuracy or communicative purpose.

At the conceptual level, sustainability translation captures the textual and functional properties of sustainability communication rather than proposing a new theoretical paradigm. It clarifies that the specialization is anchored in the subject matter and communicative aims of the texts themselves, while being enriched by ecological perspectives that illuminate how environmental narratives are framed and interpreted across languages and cultures (Halliday 1990; Stibbe 2020; Hu 2020). By delineating this specialization, we set the stage for discussing genre characteristics, recurrent challenges (terminology, interdisciplinarity, multimodality, cultural adaptation), the competence profile of the sustainability translator, and the research-training-practice ecosystem that sustains high-quality work in this domain.

2.1 Definition and Conceptual Positioning

Sustainability translation is the translation of texts whose primary purpose is to communicate knowledge, policies, technologies, and practices related to environmental protection, climate action, renewable energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development. This definition situates sustainability translation within the

broader field of specialized translation, where the nature of the source text, its communicative purpose, and its domain-specific conventions determine the type of expertise required. The conceptual positioning of sustainability translation draws on genre-based approaches to LSP translation, which emphasize that specialized translation domains are best understood through the genres that constitute them rather than through broad thematic labels. As Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) have shown, genres are socially recognized communicative events with conventionalized structures, purposes, and linguistic features. Applying this perspective to sustainability reveals a coherent constellation of genres that share common communicative goals and discursive patterns, thereby justifying the treatment of sustainability translation as an independent specialization.

This conceptualization clarifies the distinction between sustainability translation and related notions such as eco-translation or eco-translatology. Eco-translatology, as developed by Hu (2020), offers an ecological metaphor for translation, emphasizing the adaptive choices translators make within a dynamic system of linguistic, cultural, and communicative constraints. Eco-linguistics, following Halliday (1990) and Stibbe (2020), examines how language shapes ecological worldviews and how discourses can either support or undermine environmental well-being. While both frameworks provide valuable insights into the ideological and ethical dimensions of environmental communication, neither defines a domain of translation based on the subject matter of sustainability. Sustainability translation, by contrast, is anchored in the content and communicative functions of the texts themselves. It is therefore not a theoretical paradigm but a specialized type of translation, grounded in the translation of sustainability-related genres.

The need for such conceptual clarity is reinforced by the increasing institutionalization of sustainability discourse. International organizations, national governments, corporations, and NGOs produce a vast array of documents that articulate sustainability goals, report on environmental performance, regulate environmental practices, and disseminate scientific findings. These documents circulate globally and require accurate, culturally adapted translation to ensure effective communication across linguistic communities. By defining sustainability translation as a specialized type of translation, we provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the linguistic, cognitive, and professional demands associated with translating sustainability-related content.

2.2 Domains and Sub-domains of Sustainability Translation

Sustainability translation, as a type of specialized translation, covers texts produced across the diverse domains and sub-domains of sustainability.

Environmental science constitutes a central domain, with texts addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and ecosystem management. These texts often rely on scientific terminology and methodological descriptions that require translators to possess a solid understanding of environmental concepts and research practices.

Climate policy represents another major domain, encompassing international agreements such as the Paris Climate Accord, national adaptation and mitigation strategies, and regulatory frameworks governing emissions, energy efficiency, and environmental protection. Translators working in this domain must navigate complex legal and policy terminology and understand the institutional contexts in which these documents are produced.

Renewable energy is a rapidly expanding sub-field that includes documentation related to solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, and hydrogen technologies. These texts often combine technical specifications with regulatory requirements and safety guidelines, demanding both technical literacy and awareness of industry standards. The circular economy and waste management constitute additional sub-fields, with documents addressing recycling protocols, resource efficiency strategies, and life-cycle assessments.

Corporate sustainability and ESG reporting have also emerged as significant areas of translation, driven by global reporting frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), and the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). These reports combine quantitative indicators with narrative disclosures, requiring translators to handle both technical terminology and persuasive corporate communication.

Environmental law forms another important sub-field, encompassing legislation, compliance documents, environmental impact assessments, and judicial decisions. Translators must be familiar with legal terminology, procedural requirements, and the interplay between national and international regulatory regimes.

Finally, sustainability communication and advocacy constitute a domain that includes educational materials, public awareness campaigns, NGO reports, and media content. These texts often aim to influence public attitudes and behaviors, requiring translators to adapt messages to diverse cultural contexts while preserving their persuasive intent.

This domain classification is far from exhaustive, given that sustainability is a dynamically evolving field whose practices and discursive needs continually extend into new disciplinary and professional territories. The breadth of these domains underscores the interdisciplinary demands placed on sustainability translators. They must be able to move fluidly between scientific, technical, legal, economic, and communicative registers, often within the same document. This complexity reinforces the need to conceptualize sustainability translation as a distinct specialization that requires targeted training, research, and professional standards.

2.3 Genre Characteristics of Sustainability Texts

Sustainability texts exhibit a number of genre characteristics that distinguish them from other types of specialized communication. One of the most salient features is their high terminological density. Sustainability discourse relies on a vast and evolving lexicon that includes scientific terms such as “anthropogenic emissions,” “carbon sequestration,” and “biodiversity hotspots,” as well as policy concepts such as “climate neutrality,” “just transition,” and “adaptation pathways.” Translators must not only understand these terms but also be aware of their standardized equivalents in the target language, which may vary across institutional contexts.

Another defining characteristic is the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability genres. Many sustainability texts combine elements of scientific reporting, technical documentation, legal regulation, and advocacy communication. For example, an environmental impact assessment may include scientific data, engineering descriptions, legal requirements, and stakeholder engagement strategies. This hybridity requires translators to navigate multiple discursive conventions and to understand how different registers interact within the same text.

Sustainability genres also tend to be highly structured. Reports, assessments, and policy documents often follow standardized formats that include executive summaries, methodological sections, data tables, risk assessments, and recommendations. Translators must be familiar with these structures and ensure that the translated text adheres to the expected conventions of the target language and institutional context. At the same time, sustainability texts frequently incorporate multimodal elements such as graphs, charts, infographics, and maps. Translators must therefore collaborate with designers and technical specialists to ensure that linguistic and visual elements are aligned.

Cultural and socio-political sensitivity is another important characteristic of sustainability genres. Environmental issues are deeply embedded in cultural values, economic priorities, and political debates. Translators must be aware of how environmental narratives are framed in different cultural contexts (Milton, 2014) and must adapt messages accordingly without compromising accuracy. This is particularly important in advocacy and educational materials, where the persuasive impact of the text depends on its cultural resonance.

Finally, sustainability genres are characterized by rapid evolution. New technologies, regulatory frameworks, and scientific findings continually reshape the discourse, leading to the emergence of new terms, concepts, and communicative practices. Translators must therefore engage in continuous learning and maintain up-to-date knowledge of developments in the field.

2.4 Challenges in Sustainability Translation

Translating sustainability-related content presents a number of challenges that stem from the complexity, interdisciplinarity, and dynamism of the field. One recurring difficulty concerns terminological inconsistency. Sustainability terminology evolves rapidly, and different institutions, disciplines, and linguistic communities may use different terms to refer to the same concept. For example, terms such as “carbon neutrality,” “net-zero emissions,” and “climate neutrality” are sometimes used interchangeably, even though they may have distinct technical meanings in specific regulatory contexts. Translators must navigate these variations and ensure terminological consistency within and across documents.

Another challenge arises from the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability discourse. Translators must understand scientific concepts, technical specifications, legal requirements, and policy frameworks, often within the same text. This requires a level of interdisciplinary literacy that goes beyond the expectations usually associated with other types of specialized translation. Moreover, sustainability texts often involve complex methodological descriptions, quantitative data, and specialized indicators, all of which must be accurately rendered in the target language.

Cultural adaptation poses additional challenges. Environmental issues are perceived differently across cultures, and sustainability narratives may rely on culturally specific metaphors, values, and assumptions. Translators must adapt these narratives to ensure that they resonate with target audiences while preserving the intended meaning and persuasive impact. This is particularly important in advocacy and educational materials, where the effectiveness of the message depends on its cultural relevance.

Access to reliable and up-to-date resources is another challenge, especially in languages where sustainability terminology is still emerging. As Sburlea and Dejica (2024) note in their analysis of Romanian sustainability translations, translators often lack specialized glossaries, corpora, and reference materials, forcing them to rely on ad hoc research and individual judgment. This can lead to inconsistencies and reduce the overall quality of translations.

Finally, the rapid evolution of sustainability discourse creates a moving target for translators. New technologies, regulatory frameworks, and scientific findings continually reshape the field, requiring translators to engage in ongoing professional development. The pace of change also increases the risk of outdated terminology or conceptual misunderstandings, particularly in long or complex documents.

2.5 The Sustainability Translator: Competences, Research Foundations, and Professional Practice

Sustainability translation requires a professional profile that combines advanced linguistic and cultural competence with solid domain knowledge in environmental science, climate policy, renewable energy, and related fields. Translators must demonstrate genre awareness across sustainability texts (such as policy and legal

instruments, ESG reporting, impact assessments, technical manuals, advocacy materials), manage high terminological density consistently, and operate proficiently with digital tools, including CAT systems, terminology management, machine translation, and AI-enhanced platforms. Ethical awareness is integral: translators mediate how environmental issues are framed and communicated, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and cultural resonance. This constellation of abilities reflects the broader model of the multidimensional translator proposed by Dejica and Dejica-Cartiș (2020), which highlights the interplay of technological, linguistic, and ethical competences in contemporary translation practice. Finally, sustainability translators cultivate habits of continuous learning, given the rapid evolution of sustainability terminology, regulatory frameworks, and digital tools.

These competences are strengthened and sustained by a coherent research agenda and a responsive training ecosystem. Several priority areas in translation studies align with the broader research desiderata identified by Dejica, Pungă, Badea, and Vilceanu (2022), including corpus-based approaches to genre and terminology, cognitive and process-oriented research, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In sustainability translation, corpus-based studies can illuminate the linguistic, terminological, and genre-specific features of sustainability texts, supporting the development of specialized resources and improving translational accuracy. Terminology research is particularly important in languages where sustainability-related vocabulary is still emerging, as it contributes to greater consistency across institutions and domains. Further work in genre analysis and interdisciplinary methodologies can deepen our understanding of how translators engage with the complex, multimodal, and hybrid nature of sustainability discourse.

These research insights have direct implications for translator training. Sustainability translation requires an interdisciplinary pedagogical approach that integrates linguistic, scientific, cultural, and technological knowledge. Students must develop genre literacy, gain familiarity with environmental and climate-related concepts, and acquire proficiency in CAT tools, terminology management systems, machine translation, and AI-enhanced platforms. Ethical reflection is essential, particularly concerning the framing of environmental issues, the responsible use of technology, and the communicator's role in shaping ecological awareness. Training must also foster continuous learning, given the rapid evolution of sustainability terminology, regulatory frameworks, and technological tools.

Professional practice in sustainability translation similarly demands a combination of domain expertise, technological competence, and ethical responsibility. Translators collaborate with environmental scientists, engineers, policy analysts, and legal experts, navigating diverse registers and communicative purposes within the same project. High-quality practice requires consistent terminology, adherence to institutional standards, and careful integration of multimodal elements. Ethical considerations remain central, as translators shape the accessibility, accuracy, and sociocultural resonance of environmental communication. Finally, the rapid pace of technological and regulatory change demands adaptability, encouraging translators to update their knowledge and refine their workflows in response to evolving sustainability challenges.

Together, these dimensions—competences, research foundations, training, and professional practice—form a mutually reinforcing framework that professionalises sustainability translation and equips practitioners to meet the communicative demands of the green transition.

3 Sustainable Translation

The rapid digitization of translation has foregrounded the material infrastructures and sociotechnical systems within which contemporary practice unfolds—from cloud platforms and collaborative environments to machine-assisted and AI-enhanced tools—raising questions about energy consumption, data governance, algorithmic fairness, and professional responsibility (AlblMikasa & Cronin, 2018). Against this backdrop, sustainable translation is understood here as a practical, cross-cutting paradigm that orients research, pedagogy, and professional workflows toward minimizing environmental impact while preserving quality, accountability, and inclusivity. Whereas sustainability translation concerns the subject matter of texts, sustainable translation defines the *conditions* and *methods* under which translation is performed: it examines the ecological consequences of technological mediation, the ethics of tool selection and deployment, and the social dimensions of platform-based labor and remote collaboration (Cronin 2017).

This perspective invites concrete measures for energy-aware and paperless production, transparent documentation of tool use, privacy-by-design data practices, bias-aware evaluation of machine output, and curricular integration of ethical AI

literacy and sustainability principles. It also underscores the translator's role as an ethical agent whose decisions about workflows and technologies have material implications for environmental stewardship and linguistic ecosystems.

3.1 Definition and Conceptual Clarification

While sustainability translation refers to the translation of texts *about* sustainability, sustainable translation concerns the *manner* in which translation is performed. Sustainable translation can be defined as a methodological and ethical framework that seeks to minimize the environmental impact of translation processes, promote responsible use of technological resources, and support the long-term viability of linguistic ecosystems. This concept is not tied to any specific domain or genre; rather, it applies to all types of translation, regardless of subject matter. Its emergence reflects broader societal concerns about environmental responsibility, digital resource consumption, and ethical labor practices, as well as the profound transformations currently reshaping the translation profession.

The distinction between sustainable translation and related concepts such as eco-translation or eco-translatology is essential for conceptual clarity. Eco-translatology, as articulated by Hu (2020), employs an ecological metaphor to describe the translator's adaptive behavior within a dynamic system of linguistic and cultural constraints. Eco-linguistics, following Halliday (1990) and Stibbe (2020), examines how language shapes ecological worldviews and how discourses can support or undermine environmental well-being. Sustainable translation, by contrast, is not a theoretical paradigm but a practical orientation toward translation workflows, technologies, and professional practices. It concerns the environmental footprint of translation activities, the ethical implications of technological choices, and the responsibility of translators to adopt resource-efficient and socially responsible working methods. In this sense, sustainable translation aligns with broader discussions of sustainability in digital humanities, where scholars have begun to examine the environmental costs of data storage, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence.

The need for sustainable translation arises from the increasing digitization of the translation profession. Translation workflows now rely heavily on cloud-based platforms, machine translation engines, large language models, and digital

infrastructures that consume significant amounts of energy. As Cronin (2017) notes, the environmental impact of digital technologies cannot be ignored, and translators must consider the ecological implications of their tools and practices. Sustainable translation therefore calls for a critical examination of the technologies that underpin contemporary translation and for the development of workflows that reduce energy consumption, minimize waste, and promote ethical labor practices. It also requires a rethinking of professional norms and pedagogical approaches to ensure that sustainability becomes an integral part of translation training and practice.

3.2 Principles of Sustainable Translation

The principles of sustainable translation are grounded in the broader framework of environmental sustainability, which emphasizes the responsible use of resources, the reduction of environmental impact, and the promotion of long-term ecological balance. Applied to translation, these principles translate into a commitment to minimizing the carbon footprint of translation activities, reducing reliance on energy-intensive technologies, and adopting workflows that prioritize efficiency, transparency, and ethical responsibility. Sustainable translation also involves recognition of the social dimensions of sustainability, including fair labor practices, equitable access to technological resources, and the preservation of linguistic diversity.

One of the central principles of sustainable translation is the reduction of resource consumption. This includes minimizing the use of paper through digital workflows, reducing travel by adopting remote collaboration practices, and optimizing the use of digital tools to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Another principle concerns the responsible use of technology. Translators must be aware of the environmental costs associated with cloud computing, machine translation, and artificial intelligence, and must make informed decisions about when and how to use these technologies. This requires a nuanced understanding of the trade-offs between efficiency and environmental impact, as well as a commitment to transparency and accountability.

Ethical responsibility is another key principle of sustainable translation. Translators must consider the social and ethical implications of their work, including issues related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the potential displacement of human

labor by automated systems. Sustainable translation therefore calls for a critical engagement with the technologies that shape the profession and for the development of ethical guidelines that promote responsible and equitable practices. Finally, sustainable translation involves a commitment to the preservation of linguistic ecosystems. As Cronin (2017) argues, linguistic diversity is an essential component of cultural and ecological resilience, and translators play a crucial role in maintaining and promoting this diversity. Sustainable translation therefore requires a recognition of the value of minority languages and a commitment to supporting their continued vitality.

3.3 Digital Workflows, AI, and Technology in Sustainable Translation

Sustainable translation relies on technology-driven workflows that minimize environmental impact while supporting efficient, high-quality production. Digital and paperless processes—such as the use of CAT tools, terminology management systems, cloud-based platforms, and remote collaboration environments—reduce the need for printed materials and travel. These workflows make it possible for translators to coordinate with clients and subject-matter experts across locations, streamline project management, and maintain consistent, well-structured documentation throughout the translation process. At the same time, sustainable practice requires awareness of the ecological footprint of digital infrastructures, including data storage, server usage, and energy consumption. Making informed decisions about digital tools, storage practices, and collaboration platforms is essential for aligning everyday translation work with broader sustainability goals.

Artificial intelligence and machine translation form an increasingly prominent part of these workflows. When used selectively and responsibly, they can support faster processing, improve consistency, and assist with tasks such as terminology extraction and draft generation. However, their integration into translation processes must be balanced with considerations related to quality, transparency, data privacy, algorithmic fairness, and the environmental costs of computational resources. A sustainable approach to AI involves using these tools where they genuinely add value, maintaining human oversight, and understanding their limitations in terms of nuance, domain expertise, and cultural sensitivity.

Implementing sustainable technology-driven workflows also involves developing clear operational practices. These may include privacy-focused configurations for cloud services, secure data-handling protocols, review processes for machine-generated content, and routine evaluation of digital tools in terms of efficiency, resource use, and suitability for different project types. Reducing digital waste—such as unnecessary versions, oversized corpora, or redundant files—further contributes to a more efficient and environmentally conscious workflow. When combined with remote communication practices and paperless project management, these measures create a flexible, resource-efficient environment that supports sustainable translation as both a professional activity and an ethical commitment.

3.4 Sustainable Translation: Professional Identity, Research, Pedagogy, and Practice

Sustainable translation foregrounds the ecological and ethical conditions under which translation is researched, taught, and performed. At the professional level, the sustainable translator embodies ethical agency and a critical stance toward technology: they weigh efficiency against environmental costs, ensure data privacy and transparency, mitigate algorithmic bias, and uphold linguistic diversity—particularly for minority and vulnerable language communities. This identity is complemented by adaptability and lifelong learning in response to evolving technologies, regulatory developments, and environmental challenges, reflecting the broader alignment of translation with the green and sustainable economy (Albl-Mikasa & Cronin, 2018), as well as the ecocritical responsibilities translators assume in the Anthropocene (Sasu, 2021).

Systemic implementation aligns research, pedagogy, and practice with sustainability principles. In research, sustainable approaches emphasise responsible data management, targeted corpora, and awareness of the energy footprint of digital infrastructures; these priorities follow from recognizing how technological mediation shapes the ecological implications of knowledge production and from the profession's growing engagement with sustainability objectives. In teaching, sustainable pedagogy adopts paperless methods and low-impact delivery, integrates ethical AI literacy and energy awareness into curricula, and develops competence in CAT, terminology systems, MT, and AI platforms while critically assessing their ecological implications—an agenda consistent with the need to prepare translators for

sustainability-driven communicative contexts. In professional practice, resource-efficient workflows reduce paper and travel, leverage remote collaboration and accessible digital tools, and implement governance for privacy, security, and fairness; across these dimensions, institutional standards and guidelines translate ethical commitments into concrete protocols and auditing mechanisms.

Together, professional identity and system-level implementation provide a holistic, durable framework that aligns translation with broader ecological imperatives and supports the long-term viability of the profession, while ensuring that translators contribute responsibly to the circulation and ethical framing of environmental discourse.

4 Conclusion

The growing centrality of sustainability in global scientific, political, and economic discourse has positioned translation as an essential mediator of environmental communication. Yet despite this heightened relevance, the conceptual relationship between translation and sustainability has remained insufficiently defined. We have addressed this gap by introducing a clear and theoretically grounded distinction between sustainability translation, understood as a *specialized type of translation* dealing with texts on environmental science, climate policy, renewable energy, biodiversity, and sustainable development, and sustainable translation, understood as a methodological and ethical orientation that governs the environmental, technological, and pedagogical conditions under which translation is performed.

In the first part of this chapter, we demonstrated that sustainability translation can be defined as a type of LSP translation characterized by specific genres, communicative purposes, terminological systems, and interdisciplinary demands. We outlined the competences required of translators operating in this sphere and identified the research, training, and professional practice structures that support high-quality work in this area. In doing so, we clarified the textual and functional features that distinguish sustainability translation from adjacent ecological perspectives in translation studies.

In the second part, we articulated sustainable translation as a multifaceted paradigm that applies to all forms of translation regardless of subject matter. We examined the

ecological and ethical dimensions of translation workflows, including the environmental impact of digital infrastructures, the responsible use of artificial intelligence, and the social implications of remote and platform-based labor. We also emphasized the need for sustainable approaches to research, pedagogy, and professional practice, highlighting how resource-efficient workflows, paperless teaching methods, ethical AI literacy, and robust data governance can be integrated into the profession's evolving normative framework.

Taken together, the two perspectives formulated in this chapter offer a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding the multifaceted relationship between translation and sustainability. They reveal translation not only as a mediator of environmental knowledge but also as a practice whose own infrastructures and decision-making processes carry environmental and ethical weight. This dual perspective underscores the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, continuous professional development, and the integration of sustainability principles into all aspects of translation studies. By introducing and defining these two complementary concepts, we provide a foundation for future research, curriculum development, and professional standards that align translation practice with global sustainability efforts and with the ecological responsibilities of the translation profession.

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STORYTELLING FOR RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT OBESITY AND ENCOURAGING HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: THE CASE OF TRAVEL WRITING IN SLOVENIA

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Using storytelling as a tool in preventing and addressing obesity can be an effective and engaging approach. Its power lies in conveying information, creating emotional connections, and fostering behaviour change. Storytelling can be employed across various strategies, including educational and personal narratives that are tailored, culturally sensitive, and focused on promoting positive actions like healthier nutrition and increased physical activity, particularly accessible forms such as walking. Stories should inspire and empower individuals towards healthier practices. Sharing personal makes messages relatable and motivating. Furthermore, storytelling can mobilize communities to advocate for policy changes and support initiatives promoting access to healthy food, healthcare, and environments conducive to active living, like safe parks and walking trails. Personal narratives spark conversations, challenge stigma, and motivate collective action against obesity's root causes.

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1 Introduction to EDU-FIT and Health

Obesity remains a significant global public health challenge, associated with numerous chronic diseases and substantial healthcare costs (Griffith et al., 2016; Sánchez-Carracedo, 2022). Traditional health communication often struggles to inspire lasting behavioural change. The European Union actively promotes healthy lifestyles through initiatives like the Erasmus+ project EDU-FIT, leveraging digital platforms. Storytelling emerges as a potent strategy, capitalizing on its ability to convey complex information, forge emotional connections, and motivate shifts in behaviour (Griffith et al., 2016). This includes promoting accessible physical activities like walking – a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle – and utilizing the inspirational power of literary stories and the experiential potential of literary tourism. This paper explores the application of storytelling techniques on multilingual digital platforms within the EU context (e.g., EDU-FIT, EU public websites) for raising obesity awareness and encouraging healthier lifestyles across work, study, and leisure, with specific attention to integrating walking narratives and leveraging literary connections.

This work aims to encourage other teachers to include and explore these elements, shown in the table 1 below, in their own teaching by providing a framework, examples and discussion of their implementation during the EDU-FIT project:

Table 1: Narrative theory, walking, story-form writing and nutrition science in pedagogical practice

Learning Element	Engagement Process and Pedagogical Practice
Narrative theory	Working with Greimas' four-stage trajectory updated by contemporary researchers.
Walking	Outdoor fieldwork.
Story-form writing	Journaling from the field and sharing narrative non-fiction with peers as travel writing.
Nutrition science	Discovering links from local culture with nutrition practices and following-up these discoveries with reading of more specialist scientific literature.

2 Literature Review Storytelling as a Health Intervention

2.1 Storytelling as a Health Intervention

Posthumanist approaches to fitness and well-being, as we move towards the third decade of the twenty-first century, propose affirmative re-figuring of the problems that have traditionally been tackled by the application of drugs. Rosie Braidotti looks initially at the overall state of exhaustion experienced by lecturers and students in western universities as a recognised health issue:

‘Provocatively perhaps, I would like to pick out some components of the exhausted condition, which transcend the negative and are capable of producing generative states. These aspects have less to do with what the professionals call ‘reduced performance’ than with a sense of evacuation of selfhood, a low-energy opening out beyond the frame of ego-indexed identity. Such an opening can be quite liberating and afford the possibility of actualizing yet unrealized potentials. Approaching the state of exhaustion affirmatively, offers some unexpected options’ (Braidotti, 2019: 16).

Above Braidotti proposes that selfhood can be retold so that negative connotations are replaced in the new story of the self as a state in which new creativity can be engendered. She goes on to show how this might be achieved:

‘Exhaustion thus defined is not a psychological mood, but rather an intransitive state that is not linked to a specific object, let alone a mental disposition. As such, it is capable of pervading the full spectrum of our social existence. ‘We are tired of something’, writes Deleuze in his commentary on Beckett, ‘but exhausted by nothing’ (Deleuze, 1995: 4). Let me dare to suggest that there is a creative potential here, which means that exhaustion is not a pathological state that needs to be cured, as an actual disorder, but a threshold of transformation of forces, that is to say a virtual state of creative becoming. Of course, I do not mean to disregard the pain, but rather encourage us to see the intensity of the discomfort as a motor of change, expressing also the capacity to open up to [...] other-than-human forces. This ability to sense, grasp and work with the virtual is one of the distinct qualities that makes us human in the first place. Which is not to say that we have always been posthuman, but rather that the specific contemporary manifestation of this contradiction need not inevitably breed negative reactions’ (Braidotti, 2019: 16-17).

In the above, Braidotti, a leading European voice on posthumanist re-thinking, calls on university educators to experiment affirmatively with innovative re-designs of humanist and social science teaching curricula. Teachers and lecturers can modify the learning environment to create activities that valorise students' own creativity as they engage more fully with the total environment outside the classroom. In her own example, above, Braidotti has drawn on the literary texts of Samuel Beckett via Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze, 1995), to offer new, imaginative ways of conceiving of the body in situations of learning and becoming. Literary texts provide possibilities for the body which open the field to creative practices, often referred to as poesis, or making. The literary text can combine emergent ideas and walking (Schaff, 2022) to set the learner in an environment of creativity.

Storytelling as a health intervention has been adopted in health education for over a decade now; in particular for examining processes in community-based participatory research (CBPR) alongside active intervention in health management (LeBron et al., 2014). Further, storytelling during physical activity has been analysed to reveal benefits for taking time for the self, away from the pressures associated with working and family life in some cultures (Banks-Wallace et al., 2007). The intellectual demand of recounting narrative fragments offers the storytelling student or teacher, an opportunity to realise an affirmative selfhood. Whilst the listeners enjoy the complexities of reconstructing the fragments into a new narrative.

With the integration of mobile Web 2.0 technologies that put field researchers and students in contact with both their colleagues back in the laboratory, and with nature and geo-information systems, a new literary writing has been identified in the academic literature. The elements of this posthumanist literary compound are enumerated here by Dong et al.:

'Considering the salient linkages to Deleuzian and ecofeminist thought: (i) Characters with fluid identities align with Deleuze's deterritorialization. (ii) Nonlinear narratives mirror interconnected ecofeminist perspectives. (iii) Technology reshaping human relationships reflects risks of environmental alienation. (iv) Intertextuality embodies Deleuze's creative repetition. (v) Reimagined archetypes challenge dualisms. Contemporary literature, in its myriad forms, reflects the evolving societal consciousness, drawing heavily from philosophical wellsprings like Deleuze and ecofeminism. As readers delve into these narratives, they engage with stories and profound philosophical inquiries' (Dong et al., 2023: 305).

Students and lecturers can be introduced to these theoretical elements so that they consider them in the creation of their own literary artefacts. Through digital dialogue with their colleagues back in the university they can share fragments in from their live journaling in online notebooks from the mountain walk. The fragment is one of the key elements proposed by Deleuze in the literary machine, as readers and writers are in the act of becoming part of the more-than-human world. The elements that Deleuze lists below are taken from his reading of Proust's novel (Proust, 1987):

‘The dragons of Balbec, the patch of wall in the Vermeer, the little phrase of Vinteuil, mysterious viewpoints, tell us the same thing as [the] wind [...] they do not make the [literary] work into an organic totality, but rather each acts as a fragment that determines a crystallization’ (Deleuze, 2000: 115).



Figure 1: Road Sign for the famous Trojane Restaurant Producing Famous Raised Doughnuts.

Photograph by the author: Jasna Potočnik Topler, July 2019.

Thus, the creation of the story can proceed by fragments noted and stored as the case study participant does during her journaling for this travel writing project (Picture 1), the Both project, documented in Mansfield and Potočnik Topler (2023):

'Dober dan. Kaj boste?' 'Dober dan. Štiri krofe, prosim', 'Z marmelado?' 'Z marmelado, prosim', 'Izvolite'. 'Hvala'. Many people, colourful Slovene dialects mixed with some German. The service was speedy. I went for some cold juice and doughnuts for later. 12 euros and 30 cents altogether. Receipt dated 19 July 2019 - Jasna field notes 2019' (Mansfield & Potočnik Topler, 2023: 115)

Notice how stopping for food forms an important moment around which the research journey unfolds, but these stops also result in the Deleuzian fragments of the new literary form identified by Dong et al., (2023) above.

'[...] we made a dinner break at the Grof Restaurant – another one with an enviable tradition – since 1901. A hundred years ago this was a stop for coachmen, today some exhibited objects, photographs and furniture hide and reveal stories about the way of living of our great grandparents. On arrival, the smell was tempting and the atmosphere great. And the parking areas were full, which is always a good sign of the service quality - Jasna field notes 2019' (Mansfield & Potočnik Topler, 2023: 116)

3 Methodology: Storytelling as a Pedagogical Method

Storytelling as a pedagogical method enhances critical and creative thinking, as well as communicative techniques. Employing storytelling is crucial for helping students contextualize and articulate their work – from initial ideas through analysis, visualization, and final expression (McDrury & Alterio, 2003). What is more, storytelling helps students to overcome difficulties with creative ability and communication in the design process, providing reflective and experiential techniques (Lee et al., 2023).

According to Medupin (2024), students responded very positively to using storytelling as a learning tool. They, in fact, reported that it helped them connect academic material to real-life situations, fostered a strong sense of community and teamwork, and left them wanting more time for discussion (Medupin, 2024). The collaborative nature of storytelling was identified as a crucial factor for its success,

promoting social interaction that sustained their interest and prolonged engagement with the subject matter (Medupin, 2024). In another study, performed by Zhulamanova and Bernhardt (2024), students reported that the storytelling exercises improved their focus, helped in remembering assigned material, and deepened their comprehension of course concepts; their feedback also highlighted the activity's usefulness for personal reflection and applying concepts to real-world situations. Research also indicates that the accessibility of digital tools creates extensive opportunities to employ various storytelling methods in higher education (Zaitseva et al., 2024). Rose and Johnson (2025) argue that for storytelling interventions to effectively shift student understanding, careful selection of the narrative and its format is of the utmost importance. The process starts by capturing attention with a story relevant to the lesson (educators can adapt existing tales instead of creating new ones, saving valuable time), after aligning the story with learning goals, teachers should scaffold instruction by guiding students to discuss key vocabulary and symbols (Rose and Johnson, 2025). Therefore, when implemented strategically through careful narrative selection and structured facilitation, storytelling transcends its role as a mere engagement tool and emerges as a transformative pedagogical strategy, capable of enhancing deeper cognitive engagement, building community, and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in modern education.

3.1 Travel Writing

This section explores a case study of a group of master's students completing a travel writing activity based around the town of Brežice, Slovenia. The process for literary travel writing using dialogue journaling is a well-documented methodology (Mansfield et al., 2025). This processual approach was used with the students and with a heritage industry-specialist from the museum in Brežice (Figures 3 and 4). The group were trained in dialogue journaling, so that all the steps for developing the written stories were archived as a genealogical record of how decisions were made in the story construction.

Travel writing activities around and beyond the campus site create experiential learning opportunities for teachers and students. Connecting with the land and landscape has become a valuable movement in posthumanist education practices in recent years since it gives the learner and teacher a way of encountering affect through all the senses and thereby being changed by the world that they are part of rather than observing through representational media:

‘[...] intra-acting [*s/z*] with outdoor experiential education in the researcher/teacher enactments afforded the opportunity to attend to the multisensory, thick, and affective materiality of relationships with Other(s). By affect, I am referring to the classical Spinozian meanings, which relate to the body’s capacity to affect something and to be simultaneously affected’ (Riley, 2019: 92).

Story structure has a long history of theory, the four-stage trajectory of narrative, from Greimas, offers educators an opportunity to apply established theory in teaching and in the co-creation of new tourism narratives:

‘[Greimas’ narrative trajectory] consists of four stages: (i) the manipulation stage: the events that lead to the subject of a narrative desiring a certain object; (ii) the competence stage: the events through which the subject acquires the ability to act in order to achieve this object; (iii) the performance stage: the subject either achieves the object, or not; and (iv) the sanctions stage: the subject’s actions are evaluated and sanctioned.’ (Moenandar et al., 2024: 312).

Learners improving their travel writing skills can be introduced to these four stages, both to give them a structure for their own creative work but also, as a framework for the research process that is required to discover aspects of the place under study that can be included in the travel stories. One key element of travel writing is the local foods available to the visitor and hence the reader of the travel stories, explained here in methods for travel writers:

“[Method Number] **(D6.) Respite, repose and restore.** Food, respite from the journey, restoration, drink, indoors, comfort. Offer to your readers places and passages of repose. Use the opportunity to discuss a local dish and its link to the terroir. The cafés you find and document on your walking route will help later visitors to plan that same route and ensure that they are in your footsteps to share some of your recorded emotions as you near the exact spot that is drawing you on your quest. This is also an opportunity to take out your notebook and writing instrument and make a record of your emotion here; the table in the café becomes a plateau” (Mansfield, 2020: 5).

In Greimas' stage (i), the students are shown important cultural artefacts from the local museum, the Posavje Museum. This can be done as fieldwork, during the project we completed this fieldwork in mid-May 2023, then documented our fieldwork by blogging; and supplemented the research in-class by using the museum's web pages. An oil painting from 1972 by a teacher at Brežice Grammar School, called Miroslav Kugler stood out as an important local connection during the dialogue work in the online sessions. The painting is called 'Hayracks 2', and shows agricultural hay-drying racks, a young couple, and a field of white flowering buckwheat. It was the hay-drying racks that first attracted both the research group and the exhibition curators as representative of the ethnography of the Lower Sava Valley, or Posavje, Slovenia.

However, for this activity the subjects of the narrative needed an object that would be a local food to find and enjoy as their narrative quest. The subject in travel writing is usually the I-narrator, recounting their walk through the town. In this way, the subject is easily identified with by the visitor reading the travel story.

Greimas' stage (i) is called the manipulation stage by Moenandar et al. (Moenandar et al., 2024, p.312), which does not sound a positive process, however by using dialogue and prompting the students with questions, in the knowledge that we were trying to manipulate the research materials to create an object that is desirable, we arrived at an exciting discovery. It was not the hay in the drying racks, which is part of the dairy industry, but the buckwheat itself that led to the discussion of a Slovenian dish. A dough made from buckwheat flour is used in the dumpling or pastry dish called štruklji. To complete stage (i) academic research in journals reveals that buckwheat is desirable for someone interested in healthy eating:

'Buckwheat protein is of outstanding quality and, unlike popular cereals, is rich in essential amino acid, lysine. Health benefits of this plant include reducing plasma cholesterol level, anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic effects and enhancing hypertension symptoms. Buckwheat is also used in a gluten free diet in people with celiac disease [...]' (Noreen et al., 2021: 15).

The filling for štruklji can be ricotta cheese, apple or walnut, so that it serves as a savoury or sweet course in a meal. Here the narrator of the travel story was quickly moving into (ii) the competence stage, the events and the acquiring of knowledge required by the narrator to act to achieve the goal; in this case to buy, enjoy and write

about a štruklji. If it could be a main course or a desert, then this knowledge would help in ordering it in a café or restaurant.

Into the performance stage (iii) the narrator follows a route around the town of Brežice using the literary travel writer's ellipse to plan their stops at cafés, shops and monuments, see Figure 2. Walking in urban spaces contributes to health, well-being and opens a new field of ethnographic inquiry for the learners (Larsen, 2025). This elliptical route, proposed by the current authors from their fieldwork in urban tourism, is to explore European towns built on riverbanks, and is shown below:

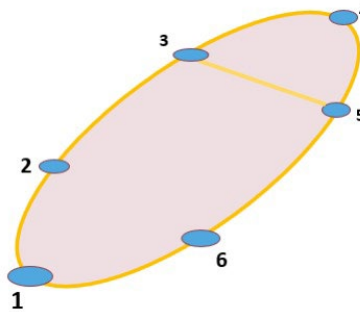


Figure 2: The Literary Travel Writer's Elliptical Route Map, used to plan stopping points and to return writer to starting point 1.

Source: Authors' design.

The story can then be recounted, trying first the pizza restaurant, Huda Pizza, where the narrator is unsuccessful but learns more about the dish, štruklji, and follows a suggestion to try the Kava Bar café higher up the street. Here the narrator discovers that some biscuit-making companies have begun to use buckwheat in snack biscuits, calling them Buckwheat Thins, which would be a useful street snack for tourists to carry with them when walking, but still no štruklji.

Finally, towards the end of Greimas' stage (iii) and moving into (iv), the narrator returns, apparently defeated, to the hotel Pr' Šefu, Prešernova cesta 17, 8250 Brežice, and recounts his lack of success in his quest for štruklji; a local researcher has written the word on a slip of paper to help with the pronunciation. The restaurant staff rally round and using their local knowledge create the dish for him using local cheese and buckwheat flour.



Figure 3: Journaling at an elliptical table in the Kava Bar Jazz Pub, Trg Izgnancev 2, 8250 Brežice, Slovenia. 17 May 2023.

Photograph: Charles Mansfield (author).

Stage (iv) could be a food review or a consideration of how to be more prepared for discovering local foods that have healthy properties. Through the online feature of Google Maps, called Local Guides, students can write their own reviews of cafés, meals and restaurants for a wider public to help students to gain experience of live publishing.

To conclude – the overall experience of the exercise of applying the narrative theory to the exploration of a holiday destination, gives the students and the teachers a valuable memory of the quest for healthy eating, and a model for future travel writing projects in professional life. The activity creates situations for dialogue but also enacts the theory from the page so that it can be applied with greater facility in subsequent place-writing projects.

4 The Role of Hiking for Well-Being

Hiking extends far beyond the realm of leisure and recreation, constituting a holistic practice that profoundly enhances physical, mental, and emotional well-being. From a physiological standpoint, hiking represents an excellent form of cardiovascular exercise that strengthens the heart, regulates blood pressure, and builds muscular endurance, particularly in the legs, core, and gluteal muscles (Ungvari et al., 2023). As a weight-bearing activity, it improves balance, enhances bone density, and plays a preventive role against osteoporosis. Furthermore, the natural exposure to sunlight during hiking supports vitamin D synthesis, which is essential for immune defence and contributes to improved mood regulation (Fundoiano-Herscovitz et al., 2024). The psychological and emotional benefits of hiking are equally significant. The rhythmic motion of walking induces a meditative state that fosters mental clarity, alleviates symptoms of anxiety and depression, and stimulates creativity (Fundoiano-Herscovitz et al., 2024). The act of reaching summits or viewpoints provides a tangible sense of accomplishment, bolstering self-esteem and resilience. In addition, hiking is not exclusively a solitary pursuit; when practised collectively, it strengthens social bonds by facilitating meaningful conversations and shared experiences, thereby mitigating loneliness and reinforcing community ties. In essence, hiking serves as a reset mechanism, reconnecting individuals with their bodies, their thoughts, and the natural world.

5 The Role of Hiking in Tourism

Hiking also holds a central position within the tourism sector, particularly as part of the rapidly expanding domains of adventure tourism, active tourism and ecotourism. It has the ability to function as an important economic driver, attracting thousands and millions of travellers annually who contribute significantly to local economies through expenditures on guides, accommodation, food, and transport. In many rural and mountainous areas, this revenue provides essential livelihood opportunities.

In addition to its economic significance, hiking aligns with the growing trend of sustainable and experiential travel. Contemporary tourists increasingly seek immersive engagements with landscapes, cultures, and communities rather than passive sightseeing. Hiking satisfies this demand by offering an intimate mode of interaction with both environment and heritage, while fostering environmentally

responsible practices that encourage conservation (Potočnik Topler, 2022). Certain trails have also acquired iconic status, becoming emblematic of their regions and serving as global tourism magnets. The Appalachian Trail in the United States, the Camino de Santiago in Spain, and the trails of the Julian Alps in Slovenia exemplify how hiking routes contribute to destination branding, creating unique niches within the tourism industry. Picture 4 is from the Uršlja Mountain in the Karavanks Range, the longest mountain range in Slovenia, mentioned also in the legacy of the Slovene author Lovro Kuhar, known by his pen name Prežihov Voranc. As both a writer and a committed social activist, his works are inextricably bound to the landscapes of Koroška and the Pohorje massif. Novels such as *Samorastniki* (*The Self-Sown*) and others portray not only the struggles of local communities but also the raw beauty and harsh realities of their environment.

For Prežihov Voranc, the landscape was not a mere backdrop but a narrative force shaping characters' lives and destinies (Potočnik Topler, 2022). This deep interconnection is celebrated through the "Voranc Trail" (*Vorančeva pot*), a long-distance hiking route traversing the very forests, villages, and mountains that defined both his life and literature (Potočnik Topler, 2022). By walking this trail, readers and hikers alike transform into literary pilgrims, experiencing the physical challenges and natural beauty that informed Prežihov Voranc's writing (Potočnik Topler, 2022). The embodied act of traversing the terrain bridges literature and lived experience, preserving the author's legacy in a tangible, participatory form.

6 Results: Key Storytelling Techniques Identified

1. **Personal Stories and Testimonials:** Featuring real individuals sharing their journeys towards healthier habits, including struggles, setbacks, and successes (e.g., workplace ergonomic changes, student stress management, adopting active leisure). This technique builds relatability and motivation.
2. **Scenario-Based Narratives:** Utilizing hypothetical situations to illustrate the consequences of choices and the benefits of healthy behaviours (e.g., managing exam stress, consequences of poor workplace practices). This aids in understanding potential outcomes.
3. **Cultural and Historical References:** Linking health messages to local traditions, diets, ethnobotany or historical contexts (e.g., promoting traditional

European diets, connecting outdoor activities to cultural heritage sites, values local produce). This enhances relevance and cultural resonance.

4. **Visual Storytelling:** Employing images, infographics, and videos to convey health messages powerfully. This engages visual learners and improves information retention.
5. **Engagement with theory:** Taking part in activities that put theory into practice encourages confidence in using properly-researched scientific theory to inform life-style practices, rather than relying on advertisers' promotional material.

7 Discussion

The findings underscore storytelling's versatility and power as a tool for obesity prevention and health promotion within the EU's multilingual digital landscape. The identified techniques align with evidence suggesting personal narratives foster identification and reduce stigma (Sánchez-Carracedo, 2022), while scenario-based stories facilitate comprehension of behavioural consequences. The emphasis on cultural and historical references is crucial; integrating health messages within familiar cultural frameworks significantly increases their acceptance and perceived relevance, moving beyond generic advice. This cultural sensitivity, delivered in local languages, fosters the empathy and understanding necessary for collective action on issues like food access and supportive environments.

The case studies demonstrate that effective storytelling is context-specific. Techniques must be tailored to the audience's life domain (work, studies, leisure) and their associated challenges. Furthermore, empowering individuals to share their stories, as advocated in the abstract, leverages user-generated content and community mobilization, amplifying reach and authenticity. This can spark crucial conversations, challenge societal norms contributing to obesity, and advocate for necessary policy changes, as seen in initiatives calling for better access to healthy food.

8 Conclusion

Storytelling is not merely a communication tool; it is a powerful catalyst for fostering healthier lifestyles and combating obesity within the European Union. Techniques like personal stories, scenario-based narratives, cultural references, and visual

storytelling, when tailored to the audience and context and delivered in local languages, are highly effective in engaging diverse populations, conveying relatable messages, and motivating positive behaviour change. By making the abstract challenges of obesity prevention concrete and personal, storytelling builds empathy, challenges stigma, and empowers individuals and communities. Future efforts should focus on integrating more visual storytelling, expanding culturally resonant narratives, and amplifying authentic personal voices. Continued innovation in applying these narrative techniques across multilingual digital platforms holds immense promise for creating a healthier, more inclusive, and obesity-resilient future for all EU citizens. The Erasmus+ EDU-FIT project exemplifies this commitment to leveraging narrative power for public health advancement. Beyond public awareness, its significance is profoundly educational. Integrating these narrative techniques into curricula equips students with critical health literacy and communication skills, serving as a foundational strategy for lifelong learning and proactive health management. Future efforts must, therefore, focus on both approaches: expanding culturally resonant public campaigns with authentic personal voices, while also embedding these methods into educational frameworks to train the next generations.

Webography

The following websites are relevant to this chapter but are not directly referenced.

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Dr. **Jasna Potočnik Topler** is a full professor and English language lecturer at the University of Maribor. Her field of research spans across multiple disciplines, encompassing tourism, cultural tourism and its subtypes, tourism communication, and education. She is the author of several monographs, scientific articles, conference lectures, and an editorial board member of many journals, in addition to delivering guest lectures at foreign universities (such as Plymouth, Udine, Perugia, and Zagreb). She has been engaged in several international projects (as coordinator or partner), projects with the local community and students.

Dr. **Charles Mansfield** taught tourism management on post-graduate and undergraduate degrees, and literature and culture within the Faculty of Business at Plymouth University. His research focuses on city branding and cultural heritage tourism. He has published on literary tourism and in 2018 was awarded an ERASMUS+ Mobility to develop Plymouth's research and teaching with its French Riviera counterpart in Cannes. His doctoral researchers use literary travel writing as part of their methodology for their PhDs, and Mansfield has recently published more on this innovation in the practice-led thesis and on narrative inquiry in tourism development projects. In summer 2024, he was awarded a British Council writer's commission under the UNESCO Cities of Literature initiative.

KULTURERBE IM KONTEXT DER BIOBAUERNHÖFE ALS INTEGRALER BESTANDTEIL DER NACHHALTIGEN ENTWICKLUNG

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Der Beitrag stellt eine Analyse der Elemente des kulturellen Erbes im touristischen Angebot der Biobauernhöfe in Slowenien dar. Das Ergebnis der Analyse sind sechs Kategorien: Präsentation des eigenen kulturellen Erbes in Form z. B. eines Museums, Hervorhebung und Pflege der eigenen Traditionen und der Geschichte des (Bio)bauernhofs, kulturelles Erbe im kulinarischen Angebot, seine Erhaltung in den Materialien und Prozessen des Baus und der Ausstattung, Beibehaltung traditioneller sprachlicher Bezeichnungen, sei es in der Kulinarik oder bei der Benennung von Gästeappartements, Hinweise zum Kennenlernen des kulturellen Erbes in der Umgebung. Das alles steht im Einklang mit der Ausrichtung der Biobauernhöfe auf nachhaltige Landwirtschaft und nachhaltigen Tourismus, womit sich die Biobauernhöfe in den Kontext des Drei-Säulen-Modells der Nachhaltigkeit mit drei Handlungsfeldern stellen. Gleichzeitig sind auch alle fünf Punkte des erweiterten Modells nach Müller (2007) zu erkennen, wobei im Beitrag der kulturelle Aspekt besonders betont wird, der durch verschiedene Kategorien und eine Stabilität in ihrem Vorkommen vorhanden ist.

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CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIC FARMS AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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This article presents an analysis of selected elements of cultural heritage offered by organic farms in Slovenia for touristic purposes. The analysis focuses on six categories: presentation of the farm's cultural heritage, e.g. a museum; highlighting and preservation the farm's traditions and history; cultural heritage in the culinary; cultural heritage in the building materials, constructing and furnishing; retention of traditional linguistic terms, whether in the culinary or names of the apartments; and information on how to explore the cultural heritage in the surrounding area. All categories align with the organic farms' focus on sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism, thus placing them within the context of the three-pillar model of sustainability with three areas of action. At the same time, all five points of Müller's (2007) extended model are also evident, with the cultural aspect being particularly emphasized in this article, which is reflected in the various categories and their consistent occurrence.



1 Einleitung¹

Die *Sustainable Development Goals der Vereinten Nationen* (bzw. SDG 17) decken die unterschiedlichsten Lebensbereiche ab, darunter auch die menschenwürdige Arbeit und das Wirtschaftswachstum (Ziel 8). Im Rahmen dieses Ziels findet sich unter Punkt 8.9 folgende Formulierung: *Bis 2030 Politiken zur Förderung eines nachhaltigen Tourismus erarbeiten und umsetzen, der Arbeitsplätze schafft und die lokale Kultur und lokale Produkte fördert.*

Dieses Ziel ist im Kontext des Tourismusbooms der letzten Jahrzehnte zu verstehen, der stark durch die Entwicklung des Luftverkehrs sowie den Ausbau des internationalen Tourismus geprägt wurde, der heute auch für die Mittel- und auch für die Unterschicht zugänglich ist (vgl. z. B. Reddy, 2024). Im 21. Jahrhundert ist der Tourismus eng mit Globalisierung und Digitalisierung verbunden (Online-Angebote, die Rolle neuer Medien, Angebote von Fluggesellschaften und der Eisenbahn usw.). Einem Wachstum der Tourismusindustrie zeigt bereits die Angabe des WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council), wonach bis zum Jahr 2050 ein Anstieg von 1,5 Mrd. internationalen Ankünften auf ca. 3 bis 4 Mrd. zu erwarten ist – vor allem aufgrund des Wachstums der Mittelschicht in Entwicklungsländern (Reddy, 2024).

Wie diese statistischen Daten zu verstehen und mit dem oben genannten Ziel 8.9 aus dem SDG 17-Konzept zu verknüpfen sind, ist zweifellos eine äußerst komplexe und vielschichtige Frage, auf die es keine eindeutige und einfache Antwort gibt. Der Grund dafür liegt darin, dass wir die Entwicklung von Nachhaltigkeit holistisch betrachten müssen und nicht im Sinne eines Verzichts auf Möglichkeiten und Rechte der Konsumenten, sondern im Sinne ihrer Modifikation – sei es im Tourismus oder in anderen Bereichen.

Grundsätzlich ist die Idee der Nachhaltigkeit an sich äußerst einfach, wenn wir auf ihre erste Definition zurückblicken, die Hans Carl von Carlowitz bereits 1713 formulierte. Er forderte, dass dem Wald nur so viel Holz entnommen werden solle, wie durch eine planmäßige Aufforstung wieder nachwachsen kann. Der Wald solle nur so nachhaltig genutzt werden, dass auch künftige Generationen von ihm

¹ In diesem Beitrag wird aus Gründen der besseren Lesbarkeit das generische Maskulinum verwendet. Die Gründe sind also ausschließlich linguistischer Natur.

profitieren können (zitiert nach Grober, 2010). Überträgt man diese auf den ersten Blick einfache Idee auf die heutige Komplexität beispielsweise des Tourismus, wird schnell deutlich, dass wir nicht von abgeschlossenen Systemen sprechen können, in denen bei der Beurteilung der Nachhaltigkeit z. B. nur der Transport der Touristen zu den Destinationen berücksichtigt wird. Vielmehr müssen alle Aspekte des Tourismus einbezogen werden (Übernachtungen, Kulinarik, Aktivitäten in der Natur, soziale Aktivitäten, kulturelle Angebote und weitere).

In diesem Beitrag liegt der Fokus auf einem Aspekt, nämlich auf dem kulturellen Erbe und seinen Platz im touristischen Angebot. Dabei wird das kulturelle Erbe als ein weit gefasster Begriff im Sinne eines umfassenden Kulturverständnisses und nicht als Kultur im Sinne von Kunst verstanden. Die Bedeutung und Rolle des kulturellen Erbes im Tourismus wird nachhaltig verstanden, wie es im Punkt 8.9 der SDG 17 vorausgesetzt wird. Aufgrund des Umfangs wird der Beitrag auf das Angebot der Biobauernhöfe begrenzt, die als ein wichtiger Faktor für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums, die Erhaltung der Landschaft und der sozialen Strukturen im ländlichen Raum sowie als Träger des Bauerntourismus in der Zukunft interpretiert werden. Bei der Analyse des Angebots und seiner Interpretation werden Beispiele der touristischen Biobauernhöfe aus Slowenien herangezogen.

2 Biobauernhöfe als Chancen für die Entwicklung von Nachhaltigkeit

Um die Funktion des nachhaltigen Tourismus für die Biobauernhöfe zu verstehen, soll hier kurz das Drei-Säulen-Modell der Nachhaltigkeit erklärt werden. Es geht um ein wissenschaftlich fundiertes Modell, das die Nachhaltigkeit in die Dimensionen Ökologie, Ökonomie und Soziales differenziert und diese als gleichwertige und miteinander verflochtene Handlungsfelder versteht (s. z. B. Fieber, 2024, S. 30). Die ökologische Dimension umfasst die Bewahrung natürlicher Ressourcen sowie die Stabilität ökologischer Systeme, die ökonomische Dimension strebt eine langfristige wirtschaftliche Nachhaltigkeit an, während die soziale Dimension Aspekte wie soziale Gerechtigkeit, Bildung und Lebensqualität einschließt. Anzustreben ist demnach ein Gleichgewicht zwischen diesen drei Dimensionen, wobei zunehmend auch eine Erweiterung des Modells vorgeschlagen wird, und zwar um kulturelle und institutionelle Aspekte.

In dieser Erweiterung des Modells sehen wir auch eine direkte Verbindung zu dem Bereich *kulturelles Erbe*, denn die kulturelle Dimension bezieht sich nämlich auf den Schutz und die Weitergabe regionaler Identität, Traditionen und kulturellen Erbes. Das geschieht durch die Pflege traditioneller landwirtschaftlicher Praktiken, regionaltypischer Architektur oder lokaler Ernährungs- und Lebensweisen, die im nachhaltigen Tourismus bewusst aufgegriffen und vermittelt werden.

Eine über das klassische Drei-Säulen-Modell hinausgehende Betrachtung der Nachhaltigkeit im Tourismus bietet das von Müller (2007, S. 28–29) entwickelte Modell, das zwei weitere Dimensionen enthält: das subjektive Wohlbefinden der einheimischen Bevölkerung sowie die optimale Bedürfnisbefriedigung der Gäste. Im Rahmen dieses Modells definiert Müller fünf zentrale Punkte: wirtschaftlicher Wohlstand, optimale Bedürfnisbefriedigung der Gäste, intakte Kultur, intakte Natur und subjektives Wohlbefinden der Einheimischen bzw. der Mitarbeiter.

Die ökologische Dimension des Drei-Säulen-Modells der Nachhaltigkeit richtet den Fokus auf einen verantwortungsvollen Umgang mit natürlichen Ressourcen, den Erhalt biologischer Vielfalt sowie den Schutz von Landschaften und Naturräumen (vgl. Corsten & Roth, 2012, S. 7). Im touristischen Kontext kommt dieser Dimension eine besondere Bedeutung zu, da intakte Natur- und Kulturlandschaften häufig zu den zentralen Entscheidungsfaktoren für Reiseaktivitäten zählen. So bildet z. B. die österreichische Naturlandschaft in diesem Zusammenhang einen wesentlichen Bestandteil des touristischen Angebots und stellt somit eine zentrale Ressource der Branche dar (vgl. Damm et al., 2020, S. 54).

Die ökologische Nachhaltigkeit im Tourismus beschränkt sich folglich nicht auf die Vermeidung von Umweltbelastungen, sondern umfasst darüber hinaus ein aktives Engagement für den Schutz der Biodiversität, den schonenden Umgang mit Ressourcen sowie die Sicherung landschaftlicher Qualität (Augsbach, 2020, S. 24). Maßnahmen wie die Förderung emissionsarmer Mobilitätskonzepte, der bewusste Verzicht auf energieintensive Infrastrukturprojekte oder der nachhaltige Einsatz regionaler Produkte und Dienstleistungen leisten hierbei einen wichtigen Beitrag. Die ökologische Grundlage des Tourismus ist daher nicht nur zu bewahren, sondern auch aktiv weiterzuentwickeln, um zukünftigen Generationen vergleichbare Voraussetzungen für wirtschaftliche und soziale Entwicklung zu sichern. Ein auf kurzfristige Profitorientierung ausgerichtetes Wirtschaftsmodell hat sich in der

Vergangenheit als nicht zukunftsfähig erwiesen (Augsbach, 2020, S. 25–26). Stattdessen müssen Touristikanbieter einen langfristigen Planungshorizont verfolgen und dabei das Gleichgewicht zwischen ökonomischer Effizienz und sozialer sowie ökologischer Verantwortung wahren. Nachhaltigkeit bedeutet in diesem Zusammenhang nicht Verzicht, sondern vorausschauende Investition in eine wirtschaftlich tragfähige Zukunft des Tourismus.

Soziale Nachhaltigkeit im Tourismus umfasst demnach nicht ausschließlich die Schaffung positiver Erlebnisse für Reisende, sondern richtet den Fokus gleichermaßen auf das Wohlergehen der lokalen Bevölkerung sowie der im Tourismussektor beschäftigten Personen. Nur wenn touristische Aktivitäten zur Steigerung der Lebensqualität beitragen und diese nicht beeinträchtigen, können sie langfristig auf Akzeptanz und Unterstützung in den Zielregionen stoßen (vgl. Mathew & Nimmi, 2021, S. 996). Darüber hinaus kommt der Frage einer gerechten Verteilung von Ressourcen eine zentrale Bedeutung zu, wobei sowohl intra- als auch intergenerationelle Gerechtigkeitsaspekte zu berücksichtigen sind (Augsbach, 2020, S. 26–27).

Auf diese kurz beschriebenen Modelle wird im empirischen Teil des Beitrags Bezug genommen.

Die inhaltliche Analyse der Texte auf den Webseiten der Biobauernhöfe in Slowenien (Lipavic Oštir, 2025) zeigt, dass deren touristisches Angebot durch folgende Elemente geprägt ist: die ökologische Ausrichtung der Biobauernhöfe, die Vielfalt des Angebots, die Lage in naturnahen Räumen, die Familie als Grundlage der Aktivitäten, die Einbindung von Tradition, Geschichte und kulturellem Erbe sowie Individualität in der Entwicklung der touristischen Tätigkeit. Ergänzt wird dies durch ein ökologisches, lokales und saisonales kulinarisches Angebot sowie unterschiedliche Unterkunftsmöglichkeiten. Die Verpflichtung zu nachhaltigem Handeln beruht dabei nicht allein auf Zertifizierungen, sondern ist Teil der Überzeugungen und des Selbstverständnisses der Biobauernhöfe und impliziert Verantwortung gegenüber Umwelt und Betrieb. Von besonderer Bedeutung ist, dass ökologische Ausrichtung, familiäre Verbundenheit und Pflege von Traditionen einander nicht widersprechen, sondern sich gegenseitig stärken. Dies wirkt sich positiv auf die Stabilität der Biobauernhöfe aus und spiegelt sich teilweise auch in deren Slogans wider. Die Umweltpolitik der Biobauernhöfe umfasst sämtliche

Tätigkeitsbereiche – Landwirtschaft wie Tourismus – und wird durch die Zertifizierung des ökologischen Landbaus unterstützt.

Auch der Umgang mit den Gästen verweist auf eine ausgeprägte soziale Komponente, sowohl innerhalb der Familie durch klare Rollenverteilungen und Verbindung von Generationen als auch im direkten Kontakt mit den Gästen. Die Biobauernhöfe vermarkten sich ganzheitlich und können als beispielhafte Formen des Familientourismus gelten. Das kulinarische und das Unterkunftsangebot sind konsequent ökologisch, lokal und saisonal ausgerichtet und entsprechen damit den aktuellen Nachhaltigkeitstrends (Lipavac Oštir, 2025).

Die Webseiten ermöglichen einen umfassenden Einblick in Angebot und Arbeitsweise der Biobauernhöfe und kommunizieren vielfältige Erlebnisangebote, die den Erwartungen heutiger Touristen entsprechen. Insgesamt nehmen Biobauernhöfe damit eine sehr positive Rolle für die Entwicklung nachhaltigen Tourismus in Slowenien ein (Lipavac Oštir, 2025).

Ergänzend zeigt die Analyse erfolgreicher Präsentationsformen nachhaltigen Tourismus, dass die Biobauernhöfe wesentliche Kommunikationskriterien berücksichtigen: textbasierte Darstellungen, emotionale Bildsprache, narrative Elemente, angemessene sprachliche Ausgestaltung touristischer Produkte sowie eine zurückhaltende Nutzung rationaler Argumentation. Trotz einzelner Ausnahmen ist die Gesamtbewertung positiv, da die Webseiten überwiegend erfolgreich mit potenziellen Gästen kommunizieren.

Die Analyse der Logotypen der einzelnen Biobauernhöfe (Lipavac Oštir, 2025) zeigt eine starke Präsenz der Natur, während kulturelles Erbe nur uneinheitlich und Nachhaltigkeit lediglich vereinzelt sichtbar wird. Insgesamt ist jedoch ein hoher Einsatz der Biobauernhöfe für eine umfassende Selbstdarstellung erkennbar. Gleichzeitig besteht ein deutlicher Bedarf an einem gemeinsamen Internetauftritt, um die Sichtbarkeit der Biobauernhöfe zu erhöhen. Bestehende Plattformen wie *Nasa super hrana*² oder die Webseite des Verbands touristischer Bauernhöfe³ leisten dies bislang nur eingeschränkt.

² <https://www.nasasuperhrana.si/>

³ <https://www.turisticneketije.si/>

Ein gemeinsamer Auftritt würde zudem helfen, zu Ländern wie Österreich aufzuschließen, die im Bereich des nachhaltigen Tourismus weiter fortgeschritten sind (Lipavic Oštir, 2025). Dort ist der Anteil ökologischer touristischer Angebote höher, und diese sind gesellschaftlich stärker positioniert. Die Verbindung ökologischer Angebote mit positiven Sehnsuchtsbildern im ländlichen Raum zeigt, dass es sich dabei nicht um einen kurzfristigen Trend, sondern um einen langfristigen Identifikationsprozess handelt.

3 **Kulturerbe im nachhaltigen Tourismus**

Der Tourismus bietet die Möglichkeit, lokale Traditionen, Handwerkskünste, Bräuche und kulturelle Elemente im Allgemeinen (wieder) zu entdecken, gleichzeitig hat der Tourismus, insbesondere der Massentourismus, auch negative Auswirkungen auf das kulturelle Erbe. Es gibt viele Beispiele dafür, auf die hier jedoch nicht näher eingegangen wird. Zu betonen ist, dass nachhaltiger Tourismus eine positive Entwicklung für die Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes und dessen sinnvolle Einbindung in das touristische Angebot bedeutet.

Wie lässt sich eigentlich der Begriff *Kultur* definieren und verstehen? Es gibt viele Definitionen, die sich je nachdem unterscheiden, ob der Begriff beispielsweise von Ethnologen, Anthropologen, Soziologen usw. definiert wird. In diesem Beitrag wird die Definition von Baecker (2008, S. 8) angewendet, nach der die Kultur als Formel und Praxis einer gesellschaftlichen Selbstverständigung beschrieben wird, wobei es sich auch immer wieder um Vergleich und Abgrenzung handelt. Eine Kultur entsteht nämlich nach einem Kulturkontakt, d.h. wenn sie auf andere trifft. Wir schließen auf das Eigene erst, wenn wir das Fremde erfahren haben. So sind die Kulturen in der heutigen Welt ein Produkt des Austausches von Dingen, Ideen und Menschen und eine Folge von Wanderungs- und Migrationsprozessen (Baecker, 2008, S. 8). Im Gegensatz dazu steht das Verständnis von Kultur als etwas, was authentisch, wahrhaftig eigen, die eigene Kultur idealisierend ist. In diesem Zusammenhang bedeuten alle von außen eindringenden kulturellen Einflüsse eine Bedrohung und Gefahr und man stellt das Authentische dem Fremden gegenüber (mehr dazu in Hanika et al. 2004, S. 186). In den meisten Teilen Europas können wir in diesem Zusammenhang nicht umhin, den Zusammenhang zwischen Kultur und Nation zu erwähnen, da der volkstümliche Nationalismus (eng. *vernacular nationalism*), der das Phänomen der Nationalstaaten in Europa dominiert und die

Sprache als zentrales Identifikationsmittel einer Nation postuliert, gleichzeitig die nationale Identität auch mit der kulturellen Identität gleichsetzt (mehr zum volkstümlichen Nationalismus siehe Anderson, 2006).

Das alles stellt einen Rahmen für interkulturelle Begegnungen im Tourismus dar. Hier kommt es zu einer Konfrontation der eigenen kulturellen Umgebung mit dem Fremden. Hofstede (2011, S. 420, 432) bezeichnet das als eine Art Kulturschock, der aber oft anders im Massentourismus ist, weil hier die Touristen von der einheimischen Kultur oft nichts erfahren. Zugleich nimmt aber die einheimische Bevölkerung das Verhalten der Touristen deutlich wahr und schließt von diesem Bild auf den Alltag der Touristen zurück, wobei es nicht bewusst wird, dass die Touristen sich in ihrer Urlaubszeit anders verhalten als in ihrer Heimat. Im Unterschied zu der typischen Vorstellung über Massentourismus versucht der Kulturtourismus kulturelle Besonderheiten in den Vordergrund zu stellen und vergangene Identitäten zu rekonstruieren, um die Erhaltung der Kulturen zu fördern (Hanika et al. 2004, S. 59). Gemäß der Definition, die von der Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen für Tourismus auf ihrer 22. Sitzung (2017) verabschiedet wurde, versteht man unter Kulturtourismus eine Art von touristischer Aktivität, bei der die wesentliche Motivation des Besuchers darin besteht, die materiellen und immateriellen kulturellen Attraktionen/Produkte eines Reiseziels kennenzulernen, zu entdecken, zu erleben und zu konsumieren. Diese Attraktionen/Produkte beziehen sich auf eine Reihe von charakteristischen materiellen, intellektuellen, spirituellen und emotionalen Merkmalen einer Gesellschaft, die Kunst und Architektur, historisches und kulturelles Erbe, kulinarisches Erbe, Literatur, Musik, Kreativwirtschaft und lebendige Kulturen mit ihren Lebensweisen, Wertesystemen, Überzeugungen und Traditionen umfassen.

Der Kulturtourismus kann also als eine Art des Tourismus verstanden werden, was uns jedoch nicht alles darüber sagt, nach welchen Prinzipien und unter Berücksichtigung welcher Faktoren der Kulturtourismus funktioniert. Das Kennenlernen von materiellen und immateriellen kulturellen Attraktionen/Produkte schließt nicht automatisch die Haltung zum nachhaltigen Aspekt ein. Betrachten wir es also aus dieser Perspektive. Seit etwa den 70er Jahren gibt es einen Trend, den manche als *sanften Tourismus*, andere als *ökologischen Tourismus* oder anders bezeichnen. Ihnen gemeinsam ist die Abkehr vom Massentourismus und seinen umweltschädlichen Auswirkungen. Dabei müssen sowohl die

Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt als auch die wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Aspekte des Tourismus berücksichtigt werden. Der Tourismus soll also eine wirtschaftliche Existenzgrundlage sichern, ohne jedoch die soziokulturellen Werte und Gemeinschaften zu gefährden. In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich eine vielfältige Terminologie entwickelt, die solche Formen des Tourismus bezeichnet (dt. *nachhaltiger Tourismus, grüner Tourismus, Ökotourismus, sanfter Tourismus*, slow. *zeleni turizem, trajnostni turizem, mehki turizem, ekoturizem*). Es gibt zwar kleine Unterschiede zwischen ihnen, aber im Grunde genommen handelt es sich um eine identische Position, vergleichbar mit der folgenden Definition des nachhaltigen Tourismus von UNWTO (2005): *Tourismus, der seine aktuellen und zukünftigen wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und ökologischen Auswirkungen in vollem Umfang berücksichtigt und dabei die Bedürfnisse der Besucher, der Industrie, der Umwelt und der gastgebenden Gemeinschaften anspricht.*

Wenn das kulturelle Erbe Teil des touristischen Angebots ist, sei es in Form von Kulturerbe-Tourismus oder durch die Einbindung des kulturellen Erbes in ein Angebot, das man sonst nicht als Kulturtourismus bezeichnen würde, da diese Einbindung in Umfang und Ausrichtung variieren kann, sollte im Folgenden die Frage beantwortet werden, wie die Verbindung zwischen der Einbeziehung kultureller Elemente in den Tourismus (und den Kulturerbe-Tourismus) und dem Bauerntourismus zu verstehen ist.

Diese Verbindung soll eng und komplementär verstanden werden, da beide auf lokaler Kultur, Tradition und Authentizität basieren. Das sollte genauer geklärt werden.

Man kann davon ausgehen, dass beiden gemeinsam die kulturelle Basis ist, denn der Bauerntourismus vermittelt die lebendige Alltagskultur (regionale Küche, Traditionen, Handwerk, Bräuche, ...) und der Kulturerbe-Tourismus umfasst materielles Erbe (Bauernhöfe, historische Gebäude, Kulturlandschaften) wie auch immaterielles Erbe (Esskultur, Wissen, Rituale)⁴. Der Bauerntourismus ist demnach oft die praktische Umsetzung von Kulturerbe-Tourismus. Die Touristen haben die Möglichkeit, aus der Alltagsperspektive den Alltag auf einem Bauernhof zu erleben, was bestimmt eine neue und zugleich qualitative Erfahrung ist. Das kann auch damit

⁴ S. UNESCO. (1972). Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. UNESCO. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/> und UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO.

bereichert werden, dass sie sich aktiv am Leben am Bauernhof beteiligen (Mitarbeit am Hof, Genuss von lokalen Produkten, Teilnahme an Werkstätten am Hof), was den Rahmen des Kulturerbe-Tourismus (Museen, Denkmäler, kulturelle Veranstaltungen) erweitert und dabei das eine von dem anderen nicht ausschließt. Ein Beispiel dafür ist der Biobauernhof *Vodiška* im Ort Nevlje bei Kamnik in Slowenien⁵, wo ein kleines Museum des kulturellen Erbes (ein altes Bauernhaus auf dem eigenen Grundstück) in das Angebot auf dem Biobauernhof integriert ist. Auf der Webseite dieses Bauernhofs werden die Touristen auch zu Besichtigungen der sogenannten *Mammut-Siedlung* in Nevlje eingeladen und auf weitere Möglichkeiten des Kulturtourismus in der Umgebung hingewiesen. Es handelt sich also um eine explizite Verbindung von Agrotourismus und Kulturtourismus. Ein weiteres Beispiel ist der Biobauernhof *Pri Plajerju* im Trenta-Tal in Slowenien, auf dessen Webseite wir auch lesen können, dass die Familie Pretner eine reichhaltige Quelle für Informationen über die Natur und Kultur der Umgebung sei.

Weiter soll berücksichtigt werden, dass die Landwirtschaft (besonders betont die Biolandwirtschaft) ein Teil der historischen Kulturlandschaften ist (z. B. die Almen oder die Weinberge). Der Bauerntourismus hilft demnach zur Erhaltung der kulturellen Landschaften. So werden Touristen nicht nur zu Beobachtern der Elemente kultureller Landschaften, sondern lernen diese auf sehr unterschiedlichen Ebenen und in verschiedenen Formen kennen und erleben.

Der Bauerntourismus und der Kulturerbe-Tourismus haben auch die nachhaltige Komponente gemeinsam. Der Bauerntourismus bedeutet nämlich ein Zusatzeinkommen für die Bauernhöfe, das in der Region bleibt, was die ländlichen Räume stärkt und Abwanderung verhindert. Das Kulturerbe-Tourismus hat das gleiche Ziel. Die lokale Komponente soll wirtschaftlich und sozial unterstützt werden.

Was das immaterielle Erbe angeht, ist die Betonung in beiden Fällen auf der Vermittlung – es werden verschiedene traditionelle Prozesse, Arbeitsmethoden, Sitten und Bräuche vermittelt, wobei es zu einem Wissenstransfer zwischen den Generationen kommt wie auch zwischen den Bauern und den Touristen. Dieser Punkt ist auch ein Element der Nachhaltigkeit. Wie wir in Kapitel 2

⁵ <https://ecovodiskar.si/>

zusammengefasst haben (Lipavac Oštir, 2025), hat die Analyse der Webseiten der Biobauernhöfe in Slowenien gezeigt, dass diese Betriebe gleichermaßen ihre ökologische Ausrichtung und die Bewahrung von Traditionen sowie ihr touristisches Angebot, das an diese Traditionen anknüpft, hervorheben.

Gerade bei der Analyse ländlicher Räume erweist es sich als sinnvoll, auf eine strikte Trennung zwischen Natur- und Kulturerbe zu verzichten (vgl. Timothy & Boyd, 2003, S. 46), da historische Lebens- und Wirtschaftsformen, regionale Baukultur, naturräumliche Gegebenheiten sowie das Landschaftsbild eines Ortes in einem engen Wechselverhältnis stehen und sich gegenseitig bedingen.

Die natürlichen Gegebenheiten, die Verankerung in der Tradition und natürlich auch die bewussten Entscheidungen des Biobauernhofs selbst bestimmen, welche Inhalte der Biobauernhof in den Vordergrund stellt. So gibt es Bauernhöfe, die den Schwerpunkt auf den kulinarischen Tourismus legen, aber auch solche, bei denen das Erleben der Natur und sportliche Aktivitäten im Vordergrund stehen. Ein Beispiel für den nachhaltigen kulinarischen Tourismus ist eine Studie aus dem Jahr 2019 (Griesser, 2019), die gezeigt hat, dass nachhaltiger Tourismus mit dem Wertewandel in unserer Gesellschaft vereinbar ist. Hier spielt die interkulturelle Kompetenz eine entscheidende Rolle, denn der kulinarische Tourismus (zu dem auch der Weintourismus gehört) kann dazu beitragen, die Kultur fremder Länder kennenzulernen und damit die persönliche Bildung nachhaltig zu erweitern und/oder zu vertiefen.

All dies spiegelt sich auch im Bereich der Forschung wider. So hat z. B. die Studie von Geçikli et al. (2024) gezeigt, dass sich der Kulturerbe-Tourismus im Kontext der Nachhaltigkeit zu einem beliebten Forschungsgebiet entwickelt hat, was die Analyse von 657 relevanten Studien (Datenbank Web of Science) zeigt.

4 Kulturerbe im Kontext der Biobauernhöfe in Slowenien

Bei der Analyse von Online-Material wird davon ausgegangen, dass der Begriff *kulturelle Elemente* die Elemente einer bestimmten Kultur darstellt, wobei es sich um materielle, immaterielle oder auch symbolische Elemente handeln kann. Dabei ist es wichtig zu beachten, dass die Kulturen transkulturell miteinander vernetzt sind. So ist die Geschichte Europas nicht die Geschichte einer einzigen Kultur, sondern die

Geschichte vieler Kulturen, wobei eine wichtige Rolle die kulturellen Transfers spielen (Schmale, 2010), die auf Kommunikation zwischen Kulturen basieren. Die kulturellen Elemente, die in der Analyse identifiziert und klassifiziert worden sind, werden demnach als eine Art Bausteine des kulturellen Erbes betrachtet und interpretiert.

Die Analyse basiert auf den Daten aus der Studie zur Entwicklung von Nachhaltigkeit (Lipavc Oštir, 2025), in der die Präsentationen der Biobauernhöfe aus Slowenien auf ihren eigenen Webseiten nach verschiedenen Kriterien überprüft worden sind (s. hier Kapitel 2). In diesem Zusammenhang sind in der qualitativen Analyse (nach Mayring, 2015) die kulturellen Elemente nur identifiziert worden. In diesem Beitrag werden die Daten aus dieser Studie in einen anderen Kontext gestellt und es werden verschiedene Kategorien mit kulturellen Elementen identifiziert.

4.1 Kulturelle Elemente (Biobauernhöfe in Slowenien, 2025)

Mithilfe der Daten auf der Webseite *Naša super hrana* konnten im Frühjahr 2025 15 zertifizierte Biobauernhöfe gefunden werden, die sich als Anbieter im Tourismus präsentieren. Hier sind ihre Namen, Orte und Webseiten bzw. die Anmerkung, wenn es keine eigene Webseite gibt, sondern der Biobauernhof auf Facebook präsent ist⁶: 1. *Ekološka kmetija Valentan*, Malečnik/Maribor (FB), 2. *Turistična in ekološka kmetija Pri Baronu*, Planica nad Framom, 3. *Turistična kmetija Vrbnjak*, Mala Nedelja, 4. *Ekološka kmetija Glavinič*, Miklavž pri Ormožu, 5. *Šenkova domačija*, Zgornje Jezersko, 6. *Ekološka kmetija pri Vodiškaryu*, Nevlje/Kamnik, 7. *Eko kmetija Vodnjov*, Zagrič, 8. *Ekološka kmetija Šlibar*, Tržič, 9. *Posestvo Trnulja*, Črna vas/Ljubljana, 10. *Ekološka turistična kmetija Pri plajerju*, Trenta, 11. *Ekološka turistična kmetija Černuta*, Log pod Mangrtom (FB), 12. *Farma Prestranek*, Posestvo Grad Prestranek, Prestranek, 13. *Kmetija Slavec*, Knežak, 14. *Ekološka kmetija Pri Dolencu*, Vnanje Gorice (FB), 15. *Ekološka kmetija Peternelj*, Brce/Illirska Bistrica.

⁶ <https://pribaronu.si/>, <https://www.turisticna-kmetija-vrbnjak.si>, <https://glavinic.si/>, <https://www.senkovadomacija.si/>, <https://ecovodiskar.si/>, <https://www.vodnjov.si/index.php?lang=sl>, <https://www.kmetija-slibar.eu/>, www.trnulja.com, <https://www.eko-plajer.com/si>, <https://www.gradprestranek.si/druge-ponudbe/>, <https://www.kmetija-slavec.si/>, <https://turisticnakmetijapeternelj.si/en/>

Die qualitative Inhaltsanalyse der Texte auf den Webseiten (und FB) ergab sechs Kategorien, in denen verschiedene kulturelle Elemente vorkommen und sich auf alle Aktivitäten des Biobauernhofs beziehen. Das Vorkommen auf den Webseiten ist nicht gleichmäßig, trotzdem sind die meisten Kategorien auf allen Webseiten zu finden und was den Umfang und die Häufigkeit anbelangt, kommt die Kategorie b (Geschichte des Bauernhofs) am häufigsten vor. Alle sechs Kategorien werden im Weiteren aufgelistet und mit kurzen Beschreibungen und Beispielen näher erklärt und illustriert.

Kategorien mit kulturellen Elementen:

a/ Angebot auf dem Biobauernhof (eigenes kleines Museum, eigene kleine Bibliothek, Workshops, ein Laden)

BESCHREIBUNG: Das eigene Museumsangebot ist nicht nur selten, sondern auch vor allem auf ethnologische, teilweise auch auf archäologische Sammlungen beschränkt, die mit verschiedenen landwirtschaftlichen und handwerklichen Tätigkeiten in Verbindung stehen. Zugleich ist dieses Angebot auch räumlich und inhaltlich begrenzt, weil es von der Tätigkeit des Hofes in der Vergangenheit abhängt. Neben den renovierten Bauernhäusern, die als kleine Museen nicht nur zur Besichtigung, sondern auch zum Wohnen dienen können, gibt es auch Biobauernhöfe, auf denen bestimmte Gebäude vom *Institut für Denkmalpflege* geschützt sind. Eines davon, *Šenkova domačija* im Ort Zgornje Jezersko, ist vollständig als Kulturdenkmal von nationaler Bedeutung geschützt. Es handelt sich um landwirtschaftliche Gebäude aus dem Jahr 1521, die als Perlen der alpinen Architektur gelten. Alle Gebäude wurden fachmännisch renoviert und instand gehalten und dienen als Urlaubsunterkünfte für Gäste. Dieses Angebot hängt direkt von den Gegebenheiten auf dem Biobauernhof ab. Darüber hinaus gibt es auf den Biobauernhöfen auch eigene kleine Bibliotheken für Touristen, die sich durch ihre Ausrichtung auf die Vermittlung des kulturellen Erbes auszeichnen, sowie Hofläden, die neben eigenen Produkten auch solche aus der Umgebung anbieten. Diese Produkte sind ein Teil der Bewahrung des vielfältigen kulturellen Erbes, das mit der Landwirtschaft und dem Handwerk verbunden ist.

Beispiele⁷:

In Štíblac können Sie die archäologische Ausstellung Vodiškarjev dvor besuchen, die eine reiche Sammlung von Artefakten von der slawischen Ära bis zur Gegenwart umfasst. (Nr. 6)

Der Bauernhof Senkova domačija, eigentlich wegen der Aufstellung von acht mit Holzdächern bedeckten Gebäuden ein Haufenhof, ist eine Perle der Alpenarchitektur, die unser Vorfahren von mehr als 500 Jahren aufbauten. Das Hauptbaus stammt angeblich aus dem Jahr 1521, die Siedlung entstand dagegen im 14. Jahrhundert nach dem Auslass des großen Sees. Mit Liebe zu dem Erbe der Vorfahren bewahrte der Bauernhof das ursprüngliche Aussehen. Das Haus gilt wegen seiner für diesen Raum untypischen Mächtigkeit als ein Kulturdenkmal von nationaler Bedeutung und unterliegt deswegen strengem Schutz. (Nr. 5)

b/ Geschichte des Bauernhofs

BESCHREIBUNG: Die Kategorie ist auf den Webseiten aller Biobauernhöfe zu finden und stellt einen der zentralen Punkte der Präsentation dar. Einige Biobauernhöfe verbinden die Geschichte des Betriebs mit der allgemeinen Geschichte (*ein moderner Betrieb mit einem Hauch von Pfahlbauzeit*, Nr. 9), andere beziehen sich direkt auf die Geschichte des Betriebs oder stellen sie in den Kontext der regionalen Entwicklung (Nr. 5), wobei die derzeitige Eigentümerschaft nicht unbedingt mit der Vergangenheit verbunden ist (Nr. 12). In einigen Fällen wird die historische Komponente nur angedeutet (Nr. 15).

Beispiele:

Wo heute unser Hof steht, standen vor über 300 Jahren zwei Bauernhöfe, einst gekauft und zusammengelegt vom Baron aus Hočko Pohorje. Den Kaufbetrag musste der Baron sich zunächst ausleihen und diesen später mit Holztransport-Diensten abbezahlen. (Nr. 2)

Die Anfänge des Guts Prestranek reichen bis ins 16. Jahrhundert zurück, als es von der Familie Edling erbaut wurde. Im 17. Jahrhundert wechselte es mehrmals den Besitzer, unter anderem das Zisterzienserkloster in Stična. Graf Gallenberg, der das Gut pachtete, unterhielt dort ein Gestüt mit 82 Pferden. Im 18. Jahrhundert erwarb die innerösterreichische Hofkammer das Gut für das Gestüt in Lipica, das sich seit 1580 in ihrem Besitz befand. Zu diesem Zweck wurden neue Pferdeställe, ein Kutschenhaus, ein Stall für Zugtiere und ein Futterlager errichtet. Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts entstand ein großer Stall für etwa 190 Fohlen. Prestranek diente bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs als Hofgestüt, vergleichbar mit dem Gestüt Lipica. (Nr. 12)

⁷ Die Beschreibungen in der deutschen Sprache sind auf den Webseiten der Biobauernhöfe zu finden. Sofern keine deutschen Beschreibungen vorhanden sind, wird die Übersetzung ins Deutsche angeführt. In der jeweiligen Fußnote ist der Originaltext zu finden.

c/ Kulinarisches Angebot

BESCHREIBUNG: Im kulinarischen Angebot ist allgemein eine Bewahrung des kulturellen Erbes zu beobachten, wodurch die Biobauernhöfe auch in diesem Bereich Nachhaltigkeit entwickeln. Neben den Zertifikaten, die die Nachhaltigkeitsorientierung dieser Bauernhöfe belegen, finden wir auch Marken, die auf dem lokalen Erbe basieren. In den Beschreibungen auf den Webseiten werden slowenische Hausmannskostgerichte hervorgehoben, gleichzeitig wird aber auch die Bewahrung des kulturellen Erbes in den Zubereitungsprozessen selbst (traditionelle Brotbacköfen, sog. *schwarze Küche*) betont. Ebenso finden wir in den Beschreibungen konkrete Bezeichnungen für Gerichte der autochthonen und lokalen Küche (*Masunjeke, Buchweizenbrei, Minzsirup, Jezerski Zos, Bula, Pohane Šnite* und andere).

Beispiele:

*Wir sind auch der erste slowenische Anbieter von historischen Gerichten unter der Marke Heriterra. Die historischen Gerichte basieren auf dem lokalen archäologischen Erbe.*⁸ (Nr. 2)

*Die Küche des Chefs wird durch das Feuer im hauseigenen traditionellen Brotbackofen geprägt. Das Feuer ist ein Zeichen von Wärme und Geborgenheit, die Sie beim Betreten der črna kuhna sofort spüren werden. Ohne den traditionellen Brotbackofen können wir uns unsere Küche nicht vorstellen.*⁹ (Nr. 4)

*... alles mit einem Stein in der hauseigenen Mühle gemahlen ...*¹⁰ (Nr. 8)

d/ Benennungen auf dem Biobauernhof mit der Berücksichtigung der kulturellen Tradition

BESCHREIBUNG: In den Präsentationen auf den Webseiten finden wir zwei Beispiele für die Verwendung traditioneller Bezeichnungen bei der Benennung der Unterkünfte, die von Biobauernhöfen angeboten werden. Es gibt möglicherweise noch weitere solche Beispiele, die jedoch auf den Webseiten nicht ersichtlich sind. Im ersten Fall (Nr. 5) handelt es sich um die Benennung von vier Gästeappartements unter Verwendung traditioneller Begriffe, die Räume oder Gebäude auf einem

⁸ Smo pa tudi prvi slovenski ponudnik zgodovinskih jedi pod blagovno znamko Heriterra. Zgodovinske jedi temeljijo na lokalni arheološki dediščini.

⁹ Chefovo kuhinjo predstavljata ogenj v domači krušni peči. Ogenj je znamenje toplote in domačnosti, ki ju boste z obiskom Črne kuhne že na vstopu takoj začutili. Brez krušne peči, si našega kuhanja ne predstavljamo.

¹⁰ ... vse mletu s kamnom v domačem mlinu ...

Bauernhof bezeichnen.: *Kamra* (= Kammer), *Gank* (= Gang), *Kovačnica* (= Schmiede) in *Pekarnica* (= kleine Bäckerei). Im zweiten Fall (Nr. 10) handelt es sich bei den Namen der Gästeapartements um die Ohrmarken für Kleinvieh auf Hochgebirgsweiden, was ebenfalls eine direkte Verwendung des kulturellen Erbes im touristischen Kontext darstellt. Die slowenischen Namen lauten: *Stopinja*, *Rež*, *Jamca*, *Klanfa*, *Sprano*.

Beispiele:

Es gibt vier Apartments; »Kamra« bietet Platz für bis zu 6 Personen, »Gank« für 5 Personen, »Kovačnica« für 4 Personen und »Pekarnica« für 2 Personen. (Nr. 5)

Auf dem Gehöft befinden sich fünf Wohnungen. Diese sind nach Ohrmarken von Schafen und Ziegen benannt, mit denen die Tiere auf den gemeinsamen Hochgebirgsweiden früher auseinander gehalten werden konnten. (Nr. 10)

e/ Gebrauch von traditionellen Elementen im Bau und der Ausstattung des Biobauernhofs

BESCHREIBUNG: Die Beschreibungen nennen sowohl traditionelle Baumaterialien als auch traditionelle Verfahren und Methoden des Bauens, Einrichtens und Gestaltens. Hervorgehoben wird die Verwendung von Holz aus der Umgebung oder die Wiederverwendung von Holz aus alten Gebäuden auf dem Bauernhof. Alle Elemente des Baus und der Einrichtung werden in den Beschreibungen mit einem Gefühl von Heimat und Tradition in Verbindung gebracht.

Beispiele:

Die Innenräume der Apartments nehmen den Duft von naturbelassenem, unbehandeltem Holz an, während Lebensmittel und Hanftextilien den Raum mit Gemütlichkeit und Komfort erfüllen. (Nr. 9)

Die Möbel sind aus massivem Holz gefertigt: Fichte, Lärche, Esche und Aborn. Die Decken bestehen aus Wolle und Baumwolle und die Kissen sind mit Wolle und verschiedenen Getreideschalen gefüllt. Die Hausschube sind ebenfalls aus Wolle. (Nr. 10)

f/ Hinweise auf die kulturellen Einrichtungen in der Umgebung

BESCHREIBUNG: Diese Hinweise sind eher eine Ausnahme als die Regel in den Beschreibungen und finden sich nur bei zwei Biobauernhöfen. In beiden Fällen handelt es sich um Vorschläge zur Besichtigung des kulturellen oder natürlichen Erbes. Das Fehlen solcher Hinweise ist sicherlich auch darauf zurückzuführen, dass die Biobauernhöfe im Internet nicht auf vergleichbare Weise präsentiert werden und es keinen gemeinsamen Auftritt gibt, aber sicherlich auch auf den Mangel an systematischer Zusammenarbeit in der Gemeinde, in der sich der Biobauernhof befindet, und zwar im Hinblick auf die Präsentation des kulturellen Erbes. Da es sich in allen Fällen mit Ausnahme von Nr. 9 um Biobauernhöfe in kleinen Ortschaften handelt, könnten diese als eine Art Tourismuszentren dienen.

Beispiele:

Wussten Sie, dass die St.-Georgs-Kirche am See die älteste Kirche in der Region Kamnik ist? (Nr. 6)

5 Fazit

Die Auswahl an Kategorien ist sehr vielfältig und reicht von der Präsentation des eigenen kulturellen Erbes in Form eines Museums über die Hervorhebung und Pflege der eigenen Traditionen und der Geschichte des Bauernhofs, über das kulinarische Angebot und die Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes in den Materialien und Prozessen des Baus und der Ausstattung bis hin zu Hinweisen zum Kennenlernen des kulturellen Erbes in der Umgebung. Ein anschauliches und kreatives Beispiel für die Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes ist auch die Beibehaltung traditioneller sprachlicher Bezeichnungen, sei es in der Kulinarik oder bei der Benennung von Gästeparternents.

Diese vielfältige Auswahl an Kategorien steht im Einklang mit der Ausrichtung der Biobauernhöfe auf nachhaltige Landwirtschaft und nachhaltigen Tourismus, was beides in direktem Zusammenhang mit der Überzeugung der Biobauernhöfe bzw. Familien steht, dass nachhaltige Landwirtschaft und ein nachhaltiges touristisches Angebot ein wichtiger Teil ihrer Lebensauffassung und der Werte sind, die die Familie pflegt. Dies wurde bereits in einer Studie zum gesamten Angebot an Biobauernhöfen festgestellt (Lipavic Oštir, 2025), wobei die vorliegende Studie bzw.

der Beitrag den Aspekt des kulturellen Erbes hinzufügt, der nach der Analyse den anderen Aspekten gleichgestellt ist. Das bedeutet, dass das Bewusstsein für die Bedeutung des kulturellen Erbes für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung groß und gleichzeitig auch gewissermaßen selbstverständlich ist.

Damit fügen sich die Biobauernhöfe in das Drei-Säulen-Modell der Nachhaltigkeit mit drei Handlungsfeldern ein. Sie streben nach wirtschaftlicher Nachhaltigkeit und entwickeln diese auch weiter, wie aus den Webseiten hervorgeht. Sie bemühen sich um die Bewahrung natürlicher Ressourcen sowie um die Stabilität ökologischer Systeme und die soziale Dimension, die vor allem durch die Zusammenarbeit und Rollenverteilung in der Familie funktioniert.

Gleichzeitig kann man auch von der Umsetzung aller fünf Punkte des Modells nach Müller (2007) sprechen, da die Studie von Lipavc Oštir (2025) gezeigt hat, dass die Biobauernhöfe den wirtschaftlichen Wohlstand, die optimale Bedürfnisbefriedigung der Gäste (siehe online Rezensionen), eine intakte Kultur, eine intakte Natur und ein subjektives Wohlbefinden der Einheimischen bzw. der Mitarbeiter (siehe die Präsentationen der Zusammenarbeit auf den Biobauernhöfen) zeigen. In der vorliegenden Analyse wird vor allem auf den kulturellen Aspekt hingewiesen, der durch verschiedene Kategorien und eine Stabilität in ihrem Vorkommen vorhanden ist.

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GRÜNES REISEN, ADÄQUATE KULTURVERMITTLUNG: MASCHINELLE ÜBERSETZUNG IM DIENSTE NACHHALTIGER TOURISMUSKOMMUNIKATION

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Der vorliegende Beitrag widmet sich der Evaluierung maschineller Übersetzungen im Bereich der Tourismuskommunikation, wobei die Textsorte Reisebroschüre im Mittelpunkt der Untersuchung steht. Auf der Grundlage der funktionalistischen Übersetzungstheorie nach Christiane Nord (1989, 1993, 2009) sowie unter Berücksichtigung der textlinguistischen Erkenntnisse von Klaus Brinker (2010) und der werbesprachlichen Analysen Nina Janichs (2010) wird untersucht, inwiefern KI-gestützte Übersetzungswerkzeuge wie ChatGPT, DeepL und Google Gemini in der Lage sind, kulturspezifische Elemente adäquat zu übertragen. Die empirische Analyse ausgewählter Beispiele aus touristischen Broschüren über die Stadt Graz zeigt, dass maschinelle Übersetzungssysteme gegenwärtig noch ein erhebliches Maß an Inkonsistenz und Unvorhersehbarkeit aufweisen. Die Untersuchung belegt, dass keine konsistente Übersetzungsstrategie erkennbar ist und dass menschliche Übersetzer nach wie vor eine unverzichtbare Rolle bei der kulturadäquaten Vermittlung touristischer Inhalte spielen.

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GREEN TRAVELLING, APPROPRIATE CULTURAL MEDIATION: MACHINE TRANSLATION IN THE SERVICE OF A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COMMUNICATION

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This article evaluates a machine translation in tourism communication, focusing on travel brochures. Based on Christiane Nord's functionalist translation theory (1989, 1993, 2009), and considering linguistic analyses of advertising language by Klaus Brinker (2010) and Nina Janich's (2010), the article investigates the extent to which AI-powered translation tools, such as ChatGPT, DeepL, and Google Gemini, are capable of adequately conveying culture-specific elements. The empirical analysis of selected examples from tourist brochures about the city of Graz reveals that machine translation systems demonstrates a considerable degree of inconsistency and unpredictability. The study shows that no consistent translation strategy is discernible and that human translators still have a crucial role in the culturally appropriate communication in the touristic sphere.



1 Einleitung: Ziel und Gegenstand der Untersuchung

Die rasante Entwicklung der künstlichen Intelligenz hat in den vergangenen Jahren zu tiefgreifenden Veränderungen im Bereich der maschinellen Übersetzung geführt. Systeme wie ChatGPT, DeepL und Google Gemini versprechen schnelle, kostengünstige und zunehmend qualitativ hochwertige Übersetzungen, die in vielen Anwendungsbereichen bereits zum Einsatz kommen. Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt sich die grundlegende Frage, inwieweit diese Systeme in der Lage sind, die komplexen Anforderungen spezifischer Textsorten zu erfüllen, insbesondere wenn es um die Übertragung kulturspezifischer Elemente geht.

Der vorliegende Beitrag widmet sich dieser Fragestellung am Beispiel der Textsorte Reisebroschüre. Ziel der Untersuchung ist es, auf empirischer Grundlage die Qualität und Zuverlässigkeit maschinell generierter Übersetzungen zu erfassen und kritisch zu hinterfragen. Dabei wird insbesondere der Frage nachgegangen, inwiefern maschinelle Übersetzungssysteme in der Lage sind, spezifische kommunikative, stilistische und funktionale Anforderungen dieser Textsorte adäquat zu treffen.

Anhand ausgewählter Beispiele aus touristischen Broschüren über die Stadt Graz, die mithilfe dreier unterschiedlicher KI-Tools aus dem Deutschen ins Slowenische übersetzt wurden, soll nachgewiesen werden, dass maschinelle Übersetzungen gegenwärtig noch ein erhebliches Maß an Unvorhersehbarkeit aufweisen. Diese Beobachtung legt nahe, dass der Übersetzungsprozess nicht auf einer konsistenten, strategisch nachvollziehbaren Vorgehensweise basiert, sondern vielmehr auf algorithmisch gesteuerten, statistischen Wahrscheinlichkeitsentscheidungen, die nicht in jedem Fall kohärente oder adressatengerechte Ergebnisse hervorbringen.

Die Hauptthese dieser Arbeit lautet daher: Bei der maschinellen Übersetzung kulturspezifischer Elemente in touristischen Texten lässt sich keine konsistente oder nachvollziehbare Übersetzungsstrategie erkennen. Es wird der Versuch unternommen, diese These anhand konkreter Beispiele zu belegen und die daraus resultierenden Schlussfolgerungen für die Übersetzungspraxis zu diskutieren.

2 Übersetzungsrelevante Textanalyse

2.1 Textsorte, Textfunktion und Adressatenkreis

Die textlinguistische Analyse bildet einen wesentlichen Ausgangspunkt für das Verständnis der Textsorte Reisebroschüre und ihrer Übersetzungsproblematik. Brinker (2010: 17) definiert den Text als eine begrenzte Folge sprachlicher Zeichen, die in sich kohärent ist und die als Ganzes eine erkennbare kommunikative Funktion signalisiert. Diese Definition hebt zwei wesentliche Aspekte hervor: die Kohärenz als Zusammenhang auf der Bedeutungsebene und die kommunikative Funktion als übergeordnetes Ziel des Textes.

Die Textsortenklassifikation Brinkers beruht auf dem Kriterium der dominanten **Textfunktion**.¹ Textsorten werden als „konventionell geltende Muster für komplexe sprachliche Handlungen“ definiert, die sich durch „bestimmte kontextuelle (situative), kommunikativ-funktionale und strukturelle (grammatische und thematische) Merkmale“ auszeichnen (Brinker 2010: 125). Diese Merkmale sind für die Übersetzung von entscheidender Bedeutung, da sie die Erwartungshaltung der Rezipienten in der Zielkultur bestimmen.

Auch Nord sieht die Textfunktion als einen in den meisten übersetzungsrelevanten Textanalysen zentralen Faktor. Unter dem Begriff Textfunktion ist „die kommunikative Funktion bzw. die Kombination aus den kommunikativen Funktionen eines Textes in seiner konkreten Situation (Produktion/Rezeption) zu verstehen, wie sie sich aus der jeweils spezifischen Konstellation von“ Sender, seiner Rolle und seiner Intention, Empfänger und seinen Erwartungen, „Medium, Ort, Zeit und Anlass einer kommunikativen Handlung ergibt“ (Nord 2009: 79). Textsorten lassen sich folglich als konkrete Ausprägungen bestimmter kommunikativer Handlungstypen auffassen und damit als Formen soziokommunikativen Handelns beschreiben (vgl. ebd.). Laut Nord bezieht sich der Begriff der Textfunktion primär auf die situationelle Komponente von Texten, das heißt auf ihre kommunikative Zweckbestimmung im jeweiligen Gebrauchskontext; der Begriff der Textsorte hingegen zielt auf die strukturelle Komponente des „Textes-in-Funktion“ ab, also auf relativ stabile, konventionalisierte Muster der

¹ Die Textfunktion als Basiskriterium (vgl. Brinker 2010: 126).

Textgestaltung, die aus der wiederholten Realisierung bestimmter Textfunktionen in vergleichbaren Kommunikationssituationen hervorgegangen sind (Nord, ebd.).

Von den fünf Funktionen, die Brinker (2010: 97 f.) anführt,² sind für die Textsorte Reisebroschüre insbesondere die **Informationsfunktion** und die **Appellfunktion** von Bedeutung. Die Informationsfunktion zielt darauf ab, dem Rezipienten Wissen über die Welt zu vermitteln, während die Appellfunktion darauf ausgerichtet ist, den Rezipienten zu einer bestimmten Handlung oder Einstellung zu bewegen (vgl. Brinker 2010: 101-104). Flinz (2011: 160) weist darauf hin, „dass Reisekatloge³ mehrere Funktionen aufweisen, die in den jeweiligen Textsorten in Relation unterschiedlich dominant sein können“, u. z. Bereichsfunktion, informierende Funktion und Überredungsfunktion bzw. persuasive Funktion. „Im Vordergrund stehen jedoch im Allgemeinen die Informationsfunktion und die Appellfunktion“ (ebd.), denn „Reiseprospekte sind [...] nicht nur Werbetexte, sondern dienen auch der Sachinformation“ (Baldauf-Quilliatre 2010).

Ist ein Text als ein kommunikatives Zeichen innerhalb einer kommunikativen Situation zu verstehen, dann „kann die Funktion dieses Zeichens von zwei Seiten her gesehen werden: zum einen aus der Sicht des Senders/Textproduzenten als 'intendierte Funktion' (= Intention) und zum anderen aus der Sicht des Rezipienten als 'realisierte Funktion' (= Funktion)“ (Nord 1990: 19). Demgemäß hat ein Text keine Funktion, denn die Funktion wird einem Text vom Rezipienten im Prozess der Rezeption „zuschrieben“ (vgl. Nord, ebd.). Dadurch wird ein weiterer wichtiger textexterner Faktor der übersetzungsrelevanten Textanalyse Nords hervorgehoben – nämlich der **Rezipienten-** oder **Empfänger-** bzw. **Adressatenkreis**, der als einer der wichtigsten pragmatischen Faktoren berücksichtigt wird, u. z. in Bezug auf seine Rolle, seine Erwartungen gegenüber dem Textproduzenten, seine Wissensvoraussetzungen, gesellschaftliche Umgebung und in Bezug auf sein Verhältnis zum dargestellten Sachverhalt.

² Brinker (2010: 97 f.) schlägt folgende Aufstellung textueller Grundfunktionen vor: Informationsfunktion, Appellfunktion, Obligationsfunktion, Kontaktfunktion und Deklarationsfunktion.

³ Flinz (2011:158) macht darauf aufmerksam, dass Unterschiede zwischen den Textsorten Reisekatalog und Reiseprospekt (im vorliegenden Beitrag Reisebroschüre genannt) nur gering sind; „Differenzen betreffen entweder die Seitenzahl oder die Art, wie die Informationen dargeboten werden ...“

Janich betont, dass der Adressatenkreis von großer Bedeutung ist, „da sich der allgemeine Kommunikationsstil und bestimmte Adressierungsstrategien danach richten“ (Janich 2013: 27). Der Adressatenkreis der Textsorte Reisebroschüre umfasst ein breites, heterogenes Publikum, das sich durch unterschiedliche Merkmale auszeichnet: soziodemografische (Alter, Geschlecht, Beruf ...), psychologische (Denkweise, Fühlen, Vorurteile, Sprachkompetenz), soziologische (Gruppennormen und -merkmale, Meinungsführer ...), kulturelle Merkmale und Konsumdaten (Konsumbedürfnisse und reales Kaufverhalten) (vgl. Janich ebd.).

Beim Übersetzen ist darüber hinaus zwischen dem Ausgangstext-Empfänger und dem Zieltext-Empfänger zu unterscheiden, da sich die Übersetzung als Zieltext an einen anderen Empfängerkreis wendet als der Ausgangstext. Der Zieltextempfänger zeichnet sich „durch seine Zugehörigkeit zu einer anderen Kultur- und Sprachgemeinschaft“ aus (Nord 2009: 59).

2.2 Textsorte „Reisebroschüre“

Reisebroschüren sind touristische Werbetexte, die von Reiseveranstaltern erstellt und in Reisebüros ausgelegt werden. Sie sollen die angebotenen Urlaubsprodukte verkaufen – z. B. Ferien in verschiedenen Unterkünften; sie „sind eine besondere Art von Werbetexten. Sie können das zu verkaufende Produkt nicht in seiner materiellen Erscheinung zeigen [...] und bieten daher etwas Abstraktes zum Kauf an“ (Flinz 2011: 158). Reisebroschüren weisen starke Bezüge zur Werbesprache auf; nach Janich (2013: 29-30) lassen sie sich als „**High Involvement Werbung**“ einstufen, da sie sprachlich kommunizieren, mit sachlich erscheinenden Abbildungen Informativität suggerieren, meist über längere Fließtexte verfügen, an den Verstand des Lesers appellieren und sich an Personen richten, die ein subjektives Interesse am Beworbenen haben. Sie zielen darauf ab, beim Rezipienten bestimmte Einstellungen oder Verhaltensweisen zu erzeugen oder zu verstärken.

Flinz (2011: 159) betont, dass die informative Komponente in Reisebroschüren eine wichtigere Funktion hat als in anderen Marketingbereichen „und [...] als Gleichgewicht für die emotionale Werbung gesehen werden“ kann. Der Produzent spricht den potentiellen Kunden direkt an und versucht, „in unterschiedlicher Weise einen Kontakt, ein Vertrauen aufzubauen mit dem Ziel, dass vom Textrezipienten die angebotene Reise gebucht wird“ (ebd.).

Mehrere Charakteristika der Werbesprache sind auch für touristische Texte relevant, z.B. die emotionale Aufladung von Begriffen und die Verwendung von **Hochwertwörtern**⁴ und **Schlüsselwörtern**. Nach Janich (2013: 169) sind Hochwertwörter all diejenigen Ausdrücke, „die ohne die grammatische Struktur eines Komparativs oder Superlativs geeignet sind, das damit Bezeichnete [...] aufgrund ihrer sehr positiven Inhaltsseite aufzuwerten.“ Schlüsselwörter besitzen nicht nur aufwertende Funktion, „sondern sie nehmen auch anzeigen- und produktübergreifend eine Schlüsselstellung in Gedanken- und Sprachfeld der Werbung ein. [...] Ein Hochwertwort wird zum Schlüsselwort, wenn es sehr häufig in ganz unterschiedlicher Werbung vorkommt.“

Ein weiterer wichtiger Aspekt ist die **kulturelle Einbettung** werbesprachlicher Elemente. Werbung ist immer kulturgebunden und baut auf kulturspezifischen Werten, Traditionen, Konventionen und Stereotypen auf. Um erfolgreich kommunizieren zu können, müssen kulturspezifische Unterschiede in Bedeutungskonzepten und Konventionen der Textproduktion bekannt sein (vgl. Janich 2013: 284). Diese Kulturgebundenheit manifestiert sich in touristischen Texten besonders deutlich in der Verwendung von Realien – in kulturspezifischen Begriffen, die keine direkte Entsprechung in der Zielsprache und -kultur haben. Die Übersetzung solcher Elemente erfordert ein tiefes Verständnis beider Kulturen sowie strategische Entscheidungen über den Grad der Anpassung oder Beibehaltung.

Kulturspezifität manifestiert sich auch in **Textsortenkonventionen**, deshalb muss „jeder Übersetzung eine eingehende Analyse der *zielkulturellen* Konventionen der betreffenden Textsorte vorangehen“ (Nord 1991: 224).

Bei Reisebroschüren treten **kulturspezifische Übersetzungsprobleme** besonders deutlich zutage, weil diese Textsorte an der Schnittstelle von Information, Werbung und kultureller Darstellung steht. Im Folgenden sollen einige zentrale Problemfelder hervorgehoben werden:

⁴ Einige Hochwertwörter aus dem untersuchten Korpus: *saftige Wiesen, sanfte Täler, stolze Berge, Fisch aus klaren Bächen, Gemüse aus dem Garten.*

- Kulturspezifische Wert- und Erwartungshorizonte: Reisebroschüren appellieren an kulturell geprägte Vorstellungen von Urlaub, Erholung, Abenteuer oder Luxus. Diese Konzepte sind nicht universell: z. B. *Ruhe*, *Natur* oder *Authentizität* können je nach Zielkultur sehr unterschiedlich bewertet werden; was in einer Kultur als *ursprünglich* oder *bodenständig* positiv konnotiert ist, kann in anderen Kulturen als mangelnder Komfort wahrgenommen werden. Beim Übersetzen muss der Text nicht nur sprachlich, sondern auch kulturell neu angepasst werden, um dieselben positiven Assoziationen auszulösen;
- Höflichkeits- und Anredekonventionen: Die Ansprache des Rezipienten ist stark kulturabhängig; deutschsprachige und slowenische Reisebroschüren arbeiten häufig mit direkter Anrede (*Sie suchen ein Geschenk für Freunde und Verwandte ...?*) und Imperativen (*Genießen Sie...*). In anderen Kulturen könnten solche Formen schnell zu direkt oder werblich aufdringlich wirken, so dass die Appellfunktion im Zieltext abgeschwächt oder indirekter realisiert werden soll;
- Kulturspezifische Referenzen und Realien: Reisebroschüren enthalten zahlreiche kulturelle Marker: regionale Speisen, Feste, Traditionen, historische Begriffe. Diese Realien sind oft nicht äquivalent übersetzbar und müssen erklärt, umschrieben oder durch funktionale Äquivalente ersetzt werden.

Kulturspezifische Übersetzungsprobleme von Reisebroschüren entstehen vor allem daraus, dass nicht nur Texte, sondern Erwartungen, Werte und kulturelle Deutungsmuster übertragen werden müssen. Die Übersetzung bewegt sich daher häufig im Bereich der Transkreation, bei der Textfunktion und intendierte Wirkung so ausgerichtet werden, dass beim Zieltextadressaten möglichst die gleiche kommunikative Wirkung erzielt wird wie beim Ausgangstextadressaten.

Für die maschinelle Übersetzung ergeben sich aus der werbesprachlichen Dimension touristischer Texte erhebliche Schwierigkeiten. Die emotionale Aufladung von Begriffen, die kulturspezifischen Konnotationen und die rhetorischen Strategien der Werbesprache lassen sich nicht ohne Weiteres algorithmisch erfassen und übertragen. Die Frage der Werbewirksamkeit einer Übersetzung – also ob die Übersetzung beim Zielpublikum die gleiche persuasive Wirkung entfaltet wie das Original – liegt außerhalb der Möglichkeiten aktueller KI-Systeme.

3 Funktionalistische Übersetzungstheorie Christiane Nords

Die funktionalistische Übersetzungstheorie Christiane Nords stellt im Rahmen der vorliegenden Untersuchung den zentralen theoretischen Ausgangspunkt dar. Nord (1989, 1993)⁵ entwickelte einen Ansatz, der die Funktion des Zieltextes in der Zielkultur ins Zentrum der Übersetzungsentscheidungen stellt.

Nord unterscheidet grundlegend zwischen zwei Typen von Übersetzungen: der dokumentarischen und der instrumentellen Übersetzung (vgl. Nord 1989: 102-103; Nord 1993: 17-26). Diese Unterscheidung ist für das Verständnis der Übersetzungsproblematik bei touristischen Texten von entscheidender Bedeutung. Die **dokumentarische Übersetzung** ist „eine Übersetzung, mit der ein in einer spezifischen Situation der Kultur A entstandener Text dokumentiert und als solcher dem Zieladressaten der Kultur B nahegebracht wird“ (Nord 1993: 21). Bei dieser Form des Übersetzens bleibt die Fremdheit des Ausgangstextes erkennbar; der Zieltext fungiert als Dokument einer fremdkulturellen Kommunikationssituation. Zur dokumentarischen Übersetzung zählen nach Nord Interlinearversionen, wörtliche Übersetzungen, philologische Übersetzungen und exotisierende Übersetzungen (vgl. Nord 1993: 22-23).

Die **instrumentelle Übersetzung** hingegen ist „eine Übersetzung, die in der Zielkultur als eigenständiges kommunikatives Instrument dient“ (Nord 1993: 24). Der Zieltext soll die gleiche kommunikative Funktion erfüllen wie der Ausgangstext in der Ausgangskultur, ohne dass die Übersetzung als solche erkennbar sein muss. Der Text wird zum Instrument, mit dem ein bestimmtes kommunikatives Ziel erreicht werden soll, weshalb er den Normen und Konventionen der Zielkultur angepasst wird. Bei funktionskonstanter instrumenteller Übersetzung werden funktionale Äquivalente verwendet, Erklärungen hinzugefügt oder kulturelle Adaptionen vorgenommen.

Für die Übersetzung touristischer Broschüren ist in der Regel die instrumentelle Übersetzungsstrategie angemessen, da der Zieltext die gleiche appellative bzw. persuasive Funktion erfüllen soll wie der Ausgangstext. Die Übersetzung soll

⁵ Christiane Nord: *Einführung in das funktionale Übersetzen. Am Beispiel von Titeln und Überschriften.* (1993), *Loyalität statt Treue. Vorschläge zu einer funktionalen Übersetzungstypologie* (1989).

potenzielle Touristen aus der Zielkultur ansprechen und zur Buchung animieren – eine Funktion, die nur durch kulturelle Anpassung erreicht werden kann.

Ein zentrales Konzept in Nords Theorie ist die **Loyalität**, die sie bewusst vom Begriff der *Treue* abgrenzt: Loyalität meint die Verantwortung, die dem Übersetzer gegenüber allen am Übersetzungsprozess beteiligten Parteien zukommt – u. z. gegenüber dem Auftraggeber, dem Ausgangstextproduzenten und den Zieltextrezipienten (vgl. Nord 1989: 102). Der Übersetzer/die Übersetzerin muss deren berechnete Erwartungen berücksichtigen und kann nicht einseitig die Interessen einer Partei bevorzugen. „Eine 'treue' Übersetzung besteht also nicht darin, daß sie *den* gesamten Ausgangstext [...] mitsamt seiner Situation, Funktion und Wirkung, unter gleichmäßiger Berücksichtigung von Inhalt und Form etc. abbildet, sondern darin, über zielfunktionsrelevante Merkmale des Ausgangstextes unter Wahrung der Loyalität zu AT-Sender und ZT-Empfänger zu informieren“ (Nord 1989: 105).

Für die maschinelle Übersetzung ergibt sich aus dem funktionalistischen Ansatz ein grundlegendes Problem: Die Systeme operieren ohne Kenntnis des Übersetzungsauftrags, der intendierten Funktion und der Erwartungen der Beteiligten. Sie können weder eine dokumentarische noch eine instrumentelle Übersetzungsstrategie bewusst verfolgen, sondern generieren Übersetzungen auf der Basis statistischer Muster. Die Frage der Loyalität gegenüber den Kommunikationspartnern liegt vollständig außerhalb ihrer Möglichkeiten.

Aufgrund der genannten Faktoren entwickelt der menschliche Übersetzer eine gezielte Übersetzungsstrategie, die es ihm ermöglicht, den Ausgangstext unter Berücksichtigung der intendierten Funktion und der kommunikativen Absicht möglichst adäquat in die Zielkultur zu übertragen. Dabei steht insbesondere die Adressatenorientierung im Vordergrund, da die Übersetzung nicht nur sprachliche Äquivalenz, sondern auch pragmatische Angemessenheit gewährleisten soll.

4 Korpusbeschreibung und eingesetzte KI-Übersetzungswerkzeuge

Die empirische Grundlage der vorliegenden Untersuchung bildet ein Korpus ausgewählter Textausschnitte aus verschiedenen touristischen Broschüren über die Stadt Graz. Die Auswahl der Beispiele erfolgte nach dem Kriterium der

Kulturspezifik: Es wurden Textpassagen ausgewählt, die kulturspezifische Begriffe (Realien) enthalten, deren Übersetzung besondere translatorische Herausforderungen aufwirft.

Für die Untersuchung wurden drei der derzeit führenden KI-gestützten Übersetzungswerkzeuge eingesetzt:

ChatGPT 4.0 (OpenAI): Als generatives Sprachmodell basiert ChatGPT auf der Transformer-Architektur und wurde auf großen Textmengen trainiert. Im Gegensatz zu spezialisierten Übersetzungssystemen ist ChatGPT ein allgemeines Sprachmodell, das Übersetzungsaufgaben als eine von vielen sprachlichen Tätigkeiten beherrscht.

DeepL (DeepL GmbH): DeepL ist ein spezialisiertes neuronales maschinelles Übersetzungssystem, das besonders für europäische Sprachen optimiert wurde und für seine natürlich klingenden Übersetzungen bekannt ist.

Google Gemini (Google): Als multimodales KI-Modell von Google kombiniert Gemini verschiedene Fähigkeiten, darunter auch Übersetzung, und repräsentiert den aktuellen Stand der Entwicklung bei Google.

Die Übersetzungen wurden im Zeitraum von August bis September 2025 angefertigt, wobei darauf geachtet wurde, die Übersetzungen unter vergleichbaren Bedingungen zu generieren. Die Ergebnisse wurden dokumentiert und einer vergleichenden Analyse unterzogen.

5 Empirische Analyse der ausgewählten Beispiele

Im Folgenden werden ausgewählte Beispiele aus dem Korpus präsentiert und analysiert. Die Beispiele wurden so gewählt, dass sie unterschiedliche Typen kulturspezifischer Elemente repräsentieren. In jeder Analyse werden die Übersetzungen der drei KI-Tools verglichen und anhand der in Kapitel 2 und 3 dargestellten theoretischen Ausgangspunkte bewertet. Die kulturspezifischen Ausdrücke sind im Ausgangstext wie auch in den Übersetzungsvorschlägen fett hervorgehoben. Zur besseren Verständlichkeit wird jeder Übersetzung in Klammern eine wörtliche Rückübersetzung ins Deutsche beigelegt.

5.1 Beispiel 1: Haubenlokal

Kultureller Hintergrund

Der Begriff *Haubenlokal* (auch *Haubenrestaurant*) bezeichnet Restaurants, die im Gault-Millau-Restaurantführer ausgezeichnet wurden. Der Gault Millau (oder Gault & Millau) ist einer der bekanntesten und einflussreichsten Restaurantführer weltweit und vergibt als Auszeichnung die sogenannten *Hauben* (*Kochmützen*). Diese Bezeichnung ist stark in Österreich verankert, existiert aber nicht in allen Sprachen und Kulturen. Daher ist es beim Übersetzen erforderlich, eine passende Formulierung zu wählen, die die Information knapp und präzise vermittelt und zugleich dem Zielpublikum signalisiert, dass es sich um ein äußerst renommiertes Restaurant handelt.

Ausgangstext

Eine große Bandbreite an hervorragenden Gaststätten von der Hütte bis zum **Haubenlokal** verarbeitet Fisch aus klaren Bächen, Gemüse aus dem Garten, Wildbret aus der Eigenjagd, CO₂-neutral gebrautem Bier, Biolamm und Waldhonig zu köstlichen Gerichten – hier schafft man aus dem Vollen und bleibt dabei wohltuend geerdet.

Maschinelle Übersetzungen

ChatGPT 4.0 (3. 8. 2025): Široka paleta odličnih gostiln – od planinskih koč do **vrhunskih restavracij** – pripravlja okusne jedi iz rib iz čistih potokov, vrtnin z domačega vrta, divjačine z lastnega lovišča, CO₂-nevtravno varjenega piva, ekološke jagnjetine in gozdnega medu – tukaj ustvarjajo z obiljem in pri tem ostajajo prijetno prizemljeni. (Rückübersetzung: *Top-Restaurants*)

DeepL (6. 8. 2025): Široka paleta odličnih gostinskih lokalov, od koč do **restavracij z zvezdico Michelin**, pripravlja okusne jedi iz rib iz čistih potokov, zelenjave iz vrta, divjadi iz lastnega lova, piva, proizvedenega brez emisij CO₂, ekološkega jagnjetine in gozdnega medu – tukaj ustvarjajo iz polnosti in ostajajo pri tem prijetno prizemljeni. (Rückübersetzung: *Michelin-Restaurants*)

Gemini (6. 8. 2025): Široka paleta odličnih gostiln, od planinskih koč do **restavracij z Michelinovo zvezdico**, predeluje ribe iz bistrih potokov, zelenjavo z vrta, divjačino iz lastnega lova, pivo, varjeno brez emisij CO₂, ekološko jagnjetino in gozdni med v okusne jedi – tukaj se ustvarja iz obilja, a hkrati ostaja trdno na tleh. (Rückübersetzung: *Michelin-Restaurants*)

Analyse der Ergebnisse

Die Analyse der drei Übersetzungen zeigt deutliche Unterschiede im Umgang mit dem kulturspezifischen Begriff *Haubenlokal*. ChatGPT wählt mit ***vrhunske restavracije*** (*Top-Restaurants*) eine verallgemeinernde Formulierung, die die Bedeutung paraphrasierend wiedergibt. Diese Lösung ist grundsätzlich akzeptabel, da die positive Konnotation erhalten bleibt und die Wortverbindung im Slowenischen gebräuchlich ist. Allerdings geht das kulturspezifische Element – die Referenz auf den Gault-Millau-Restaurantführer – vollständig verloren.

DeepL und Gemini wählen beide eine Übersetzung, die auf den Michelin-Restaurantführer Bezug nimmt. Diese Entscheidung ist aus mehreren Gründen problematisch: Erstens wird damit auf einen anderen – wenn auch ebenfalls bekannten – Restaurantführer verwiesen, was inhaltlich nicht zutrifft. Zweitens kann eine solche Zuordnung im Hinblick auf Markenrecht sowie auf mögliche Imageeffekte im Kontext konkurrierender Führer heikel sein. Die Lösung von Gemini ist lediglich insofern geringfügig besser, als die Wortverbindung *z Michelinovo zvezdico* im Slowenischen geläufiger ist als die von DeepL verwendete Formulierung *z zvezdico Michelin*.

Aus der Perspektive des Loyalitätskonzepts von Christiane Nord ist keine der Übersetzungen vollständig zufriedenstellend. Der menschliche Übersetzer würde im Übersetzungsauftrag oder in Kommunikation mit dem Auftraggeber klären, ob das Element *Haube* oder *Gault-Millau* beibehalten werden muss oder ob eine Generalisierung akzeptabel ist. Diese strategische Entscheidung fehlt bei allen drei maschinellen Übersetzungen.

5.2 Beispiel 2: Haubenkoch

Kultureller Hintergrund

Der Begriff *Haubenkoch* bezeichnet einen Koch, der in einem mit Gault-Millau-Hauben ausgezeichneten Restaurant tätig ist oder selbst diese Auszeichnung erhalten hat. Wie in Beispiel 1, handelt es sich auch hier um einen kulturspezifischen Ausdruck, der die Referenz auf das österreichische Gastronomie-Bewertungssystem enthält.

Ausgangstext

Haubenkoch Mike Johann sprüht nur so vor Ideen und begeistert mit seiner kreativen und spannenden Küche.

Maschinelle Übersetzungen

ChatGPT 4.0 (3. 8. 2025): **Zvezdni kuhar** Mike Johann kar kipi od idej in navdušuje s svojo ustvarjalno in vznemirljivo kuhinjo. (Rückübersetzung: *Star-Koch*)

DeepL (6. 8. 2025): **Kuhar** Mike Johann je poln idej in navdušuje s svojo ustvarjalno in zanimivo kuhinjo. (Rückübersetzung: *Koch*)

Gemini (6. 8. 2025): **Vrhunski kuhar** Mike Johann kar prekipeva od idej in navdušuje s svojo kreativno in vznemirljivo kuhinjo. (Rückübersetzung: *Top-Koch*)

Analyse der Ergebnisse

Die Übersetzung von ChatGPT *zvezdni kuhar* (*Star-Koch*) ist problematisch, da diese Wortverbindung im Slowenischen nicht üblich ist. Das Adjektiv *zvezdni* bezieht sich im Slowenischen primär auf Sterne im astronomischen Sinne (z. B. *zvezdni utrinki* – *Sternschnuppen*) und wird nicht zur Bezeichnung von Berühmtheiten verwendet. Diese Übersetzung zeigt ein mangelndes Verständnis der zielsprachlichen Kollokationsmuster.

DeepL hat das Attribut ausgelassen und die Zusammensetzung *Haubenkoch* lediglich als *kuhar* (*Koch*) übersetzt. Aus werbesprachlicher Perspektive ist diese Lösung unzureichend (vgl. Janich 2013: 153–159, 169), da damit nicht nur ein inhaltlich relevantes Detail – die Auszeichnung des Kochs – entfällt, sondern zugleich die appellative Aufwertung verloren geht. Das hochwertige, positiv konnotierte Element *Hauben* wird getilgt und der Ausdruck dadurch deutlich neutralisiert. In touristischen Texten, die darauf zielen, Produkte und Dienstleistungen attraktiv zu präsentieren, sind solche wertenden bzw. aufwertenden Elemente von großer Bedeutung.

Die Übersetzung von Gemini *vrhunski kuhar* (*Topkoch/Spitzenkoch*) ist die angemessenste Lösung. Die Wortverbindung ist im Slowenischen etabliert und gibt die Bedeutung des Originals treffend wieder. Obwohl auch hier die Spezifik – die Referenz auf den Gault-Millau-Restaurantführer – verlorenght, bleiben die positive Konnotation und so die appellative Funktion dennoch erhalten.

Auffällig ist, dass keines der drei Systeme in den beiden *Hauben*-Beispielen eine konsistente Übersetzungsstrategie erkennen lässt: ChatGPT greift im ersten Fall zu einer Generalisierung (*Top-Restaurants*), im zweiten Fall zu einer unüblichen Wortverbindung (*Star-Koch*). Diese Uneinheitlichkeit deutet darauf hin, dass maschinelle Übersetzungssysteme hier keine durchgängig strategische Vorgehensweise verfolgen.

5.3 Beispiel 3: Öffi-Verbindungen

Kultureller Hintergrund

Der Begriff *Öffi* ist eine umgangssprachliche Abkürzung für öffentliches Verkehrsmittel und wird im Duden als „besonders österreichisch umgangssprachlich“⁶ markiert. Das Beispiel macht deutlich, dass der Text aus einer österreichischen Broschüre stammt und regionale Sprachvarietäten enthält.

⁶ <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Oeffi>

Ausgangstext

INFOS ZU DEN **ÖFFI-VERBINDUNGEN** – Für aktuelle Informationen zu den Fahrplänen der öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel kontaktieren Sie bitte: Servicecenter der Verbundlinie [...]

Maschinelle Übersetzungen

ChatGPT 4.0 (3. 8. 2025): **INFORMACIJE O POVEZAVAH Z JAVNIM PREVOZOM** (Rückübersetzung: *öffentlicher Verkehr/ öffentliche Verbindungen*)

DeepL (6. 8. 2025): **INFORMACIJE O JAVNEM PREVOZU** (Rückübersetzung: *öffentlicher Verkehr*)

Gemini (6. 8. 2025): **INFORMACIJE O POVEZAVAH JAVNEGA PREVOZA** (Rückübersetzung: *Verbindungen des öffentlichen Verkehrs*)

Analyse der Ergebnisse

In diesem Fall sind alle drei Übersetzungen inhaltlich korrekt, da sie den Ausdruck als *öffentlichen Verkehr* bzw. *öffentliches Verkehrsmittel* wiedergeben. Im Slowenischen gibt es keine entsprechende Kurzform, sodass hier eine explizite Formulierung erforderlich ist. Dies ist eine angemessene Übersetzungsentscheidung.

Unter dem Gesichtspunkt der sprachlichen Natürlichkeit und der Wortverbindungsangemessenheit erweist sich die Lösung von DeepL als die geeignetste. Die Formulierung *informacije o javnem prevozu* ist im Slowenischen am gebräuchlichsten und entspricht den zielsprachlichen Konventionen. Die Übersetzungen von ChatGPT und Gemini sind zwar grammatikalisch korrekt, wirken jedoch etwas schwerfälliger und weniger sprachüblich.

Dieses Beispiel zeigt, dass die maschinellen Systeme bei transparenten Zusammensetzungen, bei denen eine standardsprachliche Entsprechung vorliegt, durchaus angemessene Ergebnisse liefern können. Die Herausforderung besteht primär bei kulturspezifischen Ausdrücken, die keine direkte Entsprechung in der Zielsprache haben.

5.4 Beispiel 4: Altstadtbim

Kultureller Hintergrund

Altstadtbim ist ein Determinativkompositum und besteht aus dem Bestimmungswort *Altstadt* und dem Grundwort *Bim*. Das Wort *Bim*⁷ ist eine österreichisch-umgangssprachliche Bezeichnung für die Straßenbahn und ist im Duden als solche markiert. Die Zusammensetzung *Altstadtbim* bezeichnet ein spezifisches Angebot der Stadt Graz – die Möglichkeit, auf ausgewählten Linien kostenlos durch die Innenstadt zu fahren. Es handelt sich also um einen Eigennamen mit beschreibendem Charakter, der ein lokales touristisches Angebot bezeichnet.

Ausgangstext

An den Adventssamstagen gilt Freifahrt für alle. Mit der **Altstadtbim** geht's das ganze Jahr gratis durch die Grazer Innenstadt.

Maschinelle Übersetzungen

ChatGPT 4.0 (3. 8. 2025): Ob adventnih sobotah velja brezplačna vožnja za vse. Z **Altstadtbimom** se lahko skozi središče Gradca brezplačno peljete vse leto.

DeepL (6. 8. 2025): V adventnih sobotah je prevoz brezplačen za vse. Z **Altstadtbimom** lahko celo leto brezplačno potujete po centru Graza.

Gemini (6. 8. 2025): Ob adventnih sobotah je prevoz za vse brezplačen. Z **Altstadtbim** se lahko celo leto brezplačno vozite po središču Gradca.

Analyse der Ergebnisse

Bei diesem Beispiel wird ein grundlegendes Problem maschineller Übersetzung im Umgang mit lokalen Eigennamen und Kulturspezifika deutlich. Alle drei Systeme haben den Ausdruck *Altstadtbim* nicht übersetzt, sondern unverändert übernommen;

⁷ <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Bim>

ChatGPT und DeepL haben ihn flektiert, während Gemini ihn als Eigennamen unverändert belassen hat.

Keine der drei Lösungen ist für eine slowenische Leserschaft zufriedenstellend: Erstens wird das Wort nicht verstanden, da slowenische Leser weder *Altstadt* noch *Bim* kennen. Zweitens – und dies ist der schwerwiegendere Fehler – gehen die wichtigen Informationen über den Service – kostenlose Straßenbahnfahrt durch die Innenstadt – verloren. Diese Information ist für Touristen potenziell sehr relevant und sollte in der Übersetzung vermittelt werden.

Im Sinne des funktionalen Übersetzens von Christiane Nord wäre eine instrumentelle Übersetzung erforderlich, die den Begriff durch eine Beschreibung oder Erklärung ersetzt oder ergänzt, etwa: *Mit der kostenlosen Altstadtstraßenbahn (Altstadtbim) kann man das ganze Jahr durch die Grazer Innenstadt fahren.* Ein menschlicher Übersetzer würde hier eine strategische Entscheidung treffen müssen, die den Informationsbedarf der ZIELLESER berücksichtigt.

Dieses Beispiel illustriert besonders deutlich die Grenzen maschineller Übersetzung: Die Systeme erkennen nicht, dass ein für die ZIELLESER unverständlicher Begriff vorliegt, und sind nicht in der Lage, eine kompensatorische Strategie (z. B. Erklärung oder Beschreibung) anzuwenden.

6 Diskussion der Ergebnisse

Die empirische Analyse der ausgewählten Beispiele hat folgende Ergebnisse ergeben, die für die Bewertung maschineller Übersetzung im Bereich der Tourismuskommunikation relevant sind. Diese Ergebnisse stützen sich jedoch auf eine begrenzte Zahl exemplarischer Fälle und sind daher nur eingeschränkt verallgemeinerbar; zur Überprüfung und Absicherung der Ergebnisse wäre eine breiter angelegte Analyse mit einem größeren Korpus erforderlich:

- Es zeigt sich eine ausgeprägte Inkonsistenz in der Behandlung kulturspezifischer Elemente. Die drei untersuchten KI-Systeme wählen für vergleichbare Übersetzungsprobleme unterschiedliche Lösungen, ohne dass eine übergeordnete Strategie erkennbar wäre;

- Sachliche Fehler wurden festgestellt, die auf mangelndes Weltwissen zurückzuführen sind. Die Übersetzung von *Haubenlokal* als *Michelin-Restaurant* stellt eine faktische Falschaussage dar;
- Es lässt sich eine mangelnde Sensibilität für die Bedürfnisse der Zieldestempfänger feststellen. Bei lokalen Eigennamen wie *Altstadt* übernehmen alle drei Systeme den Begriff unübersetzt;
- Einige Probleme in Bezug auf zielsprachliche geläufige Wortverbindungen wurden identifiziert: Die Übersetzung *zvezdni kuhar* (*Star-Koch*) zeigt, dass die Systeme nicht immer in der Lage sind, zielsprachlich entsprechende Wortverbindungen zu generieren;
- Es ist festzuhalten, dass die Systeme bei relativ transparenten Ausdrücken (wie *Öffi-Verbindungen*) durchaus angemessene Ergebnisse liefern können.

Die empirischen Ergebnisse haben weitreichende Implikationen für das theoretische Verständnis maschineller Übersetzung im Verhältnis zu den etablierten Übersetzungstheorien. Im Lichte der textlinguistischen Analyse Klaus Brinkers (2010) zeigt sich, dass maschinelle Systeme zwar auf der Ebene einzelner Sätze operieren können, aber kein Verständnis der übergeordneten Textfunktion besitzen.

Aus der Perspektive der Werbesprache nach Nina Janich (2010) ergibt sich, dass die persuasive Dimension touristischer Texte von maschinellen Systemen nicht adäquat erfasst wird. Die emotionale Aufladung von Begriffen und die appellative Funktion positiver Konnotationen gehen bei der maschinellen Übersetzung häufig verloren.

Im Rahmen der funktionalistischen Übersetzungstheorie Christiane Nords (1989, 1993) zeigt sich das fundamentale Problem besonders deutlich: Maschinelle Systeme können weder eine dokumentarische noch eine instrumentelle Übersetzungsstrategie bewusst verfolgen. Sie operieren ohne Kenntnis des Übersetzungsauftrags, der Funktion des Zieldestextes und der Erwartungen der Kommunikationspartner.

Die Grundthese dieser Arbeit – dass bei maschineller Übersetzung kulturspezifischer Elemente keine konsistente oder nachvollziehbare Übersetzungsstrategie erkennbar ist – lässt sich so durch die empirischen Ergebnisse bestätigen.

7 Abschließende Anmerkungen

Die vorliegende Untersuchung hat am Beispiel der Textsorte Reisebroschüre gezeigt, dass maschinelle Übersetzungssysteme gegenwärtig noch erhebliche Defizite bei der Übertragung kulturspezifischer Elemente aufweisen. Die empirische Analyse ausgewählter Beispiele aus touristischen Broschüren über die Stadt Graz belegt, dass KI-gestützte Übersetzungswerkzeuge wie ChatGPT, DeepL und Google Gemini keine konsistente Übersetzungsstrategie verfolgen und häufig inadäquate oder fehlerhafte Lösungen produzieren.

Die theoretische Fundierung durch die textlinguistischen Ansätze Brinkers, die werbesprachlichen Analysen Janichs und insbesondere die funktionalistische Übersetzungstheorie Nords hat verdeutlicht, dass professionelles Übersetzen mehr erfordert als die rein sprachliche Übertragung von Textelementen.

Das von Nord formulierte Konzept der Loyalität – die Verantwortung der Übersetzers gegenüber allen am Übersetzungsprozess Beteiligten – markiert einen wesentlichen Unterschied zwischen menschlichem und maschinellem Übersetzen.

Für die Übersetzungspraxis ergibt sich aus diesen Ergebnissen, dass maschinelle Übersetzer nicht als Ersatz, sondern allenfalls als Hilfsmittel menschlicher Übersetzer eingesetzt werden sollte. Der Übersetzer/Die Übersetzerin wird zum Supervisor, da immer noch sprachliches und kulturelles Wissen eingesetzt werden muss, um eine geeignete Übersetzung zu produzieren.

Die Zukunft der Übersetzung liegt nicht in der Ersetzung menschlicher Kompetenz durch Algorithmen, sondern in einer reflektierten Kooperation von Mensch und Maschine.

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DIE ERSTELLUNG VON TERMINOLOGIEDATENBANKEN IM KONTEXT DER NACHHALTIGKEIT

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Das Ziel des vorliegenden Artikels besteht darin, den Prozess der Erstellung von Terminologiedatenbanken (TD) unter Miteinbeziehung der Perspektive der Nachhaltigkeit darzustellen. Zunächst werden die Schlüsselbegriffe – Nachhaltigkeit und TD – in ihrer gegenseitigen Verbindung erläutert. Anschließend wird der Fokus auf ausgewählte Verfahren der Terminologiedatenbankerstellung gerichtet und es werden ihre Vor- und Nachteile im Kontext der Nachhaltigkeit aufgezeigt und diskutiert. Den Rahmen für die Behandlung dieser Fragestellung bilden konkrete Erfahrungen, die im Laufe des Projektes Terminologiedatenbanken als wirksames Instrument zur Modernisierung und Internationalisierung der Hochschulbildung gesammelt wurden bzw. werden.

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CREATION OF TERMINOLOGY DATABASES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABILITY

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The aim of this article is to describe the process of creating terminology databases (TDs) from a sustainability perspective. First, the key concepts of sustainability and TDs are explained in their mutual relationship. Then, the focus shifts to selected methods of terminology database creation, while their advantages and disadvantages in the context of sustainability are presented and discussed. The framework for addressing this topic is based on experience from the project "Terminology Databases as an Effective Instrument for Modernizing and Internationalizing Higher Education."



1 Einleitung

Die Nachhaltigkeit gilt gegenwärtig als ein höchst aktueller Begriff, welcher das Leben und den Lebensstil der ganzen Welt prägt. Vom 13. April bis zum 13. Oktober 2025 fand die Weltausstellung Expo 2025 in Osaka mit der Beteiligung von rund 160 Ländern statt. Zu den Schlüsselwörtern der Expo 2025 gehören Nachhaltigkeit und Kreislaufwirtschaft. Die Nachhaltigkeit wird hier sehr facettenreich – wie bspw. als nachhaltige Architektur, Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Kulinarik usw. – präsentiert, was ihre prägende Rolle in der heutigen Gesellschaft belegt. Auch in Bezug auf den Bereich der Fachsprachen und der Erstellung von TD ist das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit von großer Relevanz. In dem o. e. Projekt wird die TD als eine Reihe von terminologischen Einträgen gestaltet. Der Begriff terminologischer Eintrag wird nach Sandrinis Definition (1999) verstanden: „*Terminologischer Eintrag (terminological entry): logisch zusammengehörige Menge terminologischer Datenelemente zu einem Begriff. Die Struktur des terminologischen Eintrags ist durch eine Auswahl von Datenkategorien aus dem Katalog terminologischer Datenkategorien definiert.*“ (Sandrini 1999: o. S.)

2 Spezifika der Erstellung einer TD zum Wildtierbestand

Da die diskutierte Problematik vor dem Hintergrund des o. e. Projektes dargestellt wird, werden zunächst dessen Spezifika skizziert. Eines der Hauptziele des Projektes *KEGA-012EU-4/2024 Terminologiedatenbanken als wirksames Instrument zur Modernisierung und Internationalisierung der Hochschulbildung* ist die Erstellung einer zweisprachigen Terminologiedatenbank für das Sprachenpaar *Deutsch – Slowakisch* zum Fachgebiet *Wildtierbestand*. Der Fachbereich Wildtierbestand wird mit der Natur und mit dem Naturschutz assoziiert, folglich lädt das Thema ausgesprochen dazu ein, die Perspektive der Nachhaltigkeit einzubeziehen. Es soll nicht unerwähnt bleiben, dass sich der Begriff Nachhaltigkeit selbst mit den Bereichen *Forstwirtschaft* und *Ökologie* verbinden lässt (vgl. Informationen zum Lemma "Nachhaltigkeit" unter <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Nachhaltigkeit>).

Der Fachbereich *Wildtierbestand* hängt unmittelbar mit der Jägersprache zusammen. Diese zeichnet sich durch hohe Spezifik und geringe Verbreitung aus. Zum Teil kann es auch dadurch bedingt sein, dass sie außerhalb der kommerziell interessanten Sphäre der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft liegt. Möhn (1998: 175) betrachtet die Jägersprache als „*eine Zweikomponentensprache mit fach- und sondersprachlichen Anteilen*“.

Infolge dieses gemischten Charakters sind in der Jägersprache sowohl Termini als auch Fachjargonismen geläufig. Sie ist an eine bestimmte Gruppe von Personen gebunden und kann unter Umständen schwer verständlich sein. Dazu tragen insbesondere ihre zwei weiteren Züge bei. Zum einen ist es der abweichende Gebrauch von Wortschätzen, d. h. die Wörter der Gemeinsprache bekommen auch andere Bedeutung(en). Beispielsweise bezeichnet der Ausdruck *Bär* nicht nur den Braunbären, sondern auch das männliche Murmeltier. Zum anderen geht die schwere Verständlichkeit einiger Ausdrücke auf frequente Metaphorisierungen zurück. Die Wörter *Lichter* (Augen), *Teller*, *Schüsseln*, *Löffel* (Ohren diverser Wildtiere) symbolisieren die Körperteile verschiedener Wildtiere. Zu den weiteren Merkmalen der Jägersprache gehört, dass sie – im Gegensatz zu den modernen, sich schnell entwickelnden und in ihrem Wesen sehr dynamischen Fachsprachen, wie etwa die Fachsprache des IT-Bereichs – traditionsgebunden und deshalb eher statisch ist.

Der Erstellungsprozess der TD im Rahmen des Projektes ist jedoch nicht nur durch die oben genannten Besonderheiten der Jägersprache bedingt, sondern auch durch weitere spezifische Umstände geprägt. Zu erwähnen ist die Tatsache, dass eine der Sprachen aus der TD – das Slowakische – eine wenig verbreitete Sprache ist. Damit hängt die Frage nach der Zugänglichkeit zu den entsprechenden Fachquellen unmittelbar zusammen. Diese sollten den nötigen Anforderungen – wie *Ursprünglichkeit*, *Vertrauenswürdigkeit*, *Aktualität*, *digitale Form* – entsprechen, welche auch in der einschlägigen Fachliteratur zur Terminologiarbeit gegeben sind (vgl. Wrede – Štefčík – Drlík 2016, 60 ff.; Arntz – Picht – Schmitz 2014, 40). Gepaart mit der Tatsache, dass eine der Sprachen im Sprachenpaar zu den wenig verbreiteten Sprachen gehört und dass es sich bei der jeweiligen Fachsprache um einen kommerziell eher randständigen Bereich handelt, gilt es oft als Herausforderung, genügend vertrauenswürdige Fachtexte zu gewinnen. Jedoch lässt sich in Anbetracht der problematischen Verständlichkeit der Jägersprache die Nützlichkeit der Erstellung einer TD für den Fachbereich des Wildtierbestandes leicht begründen.

3 Wege zur Erstellung einer TD zum Wildtierbestand

Nicht nur in Bezug auf die o. e. Spezifika der Jägersprache, sondern auch im Kontext der – in der gegenwärtigen Zeit so aktuellen Nachhaltigkeit – lässt sich die Frage stellen, welchen Weg bzw. welche Wege man bei der Erstellung einer TD einschlagen kann. Obwohl diese Frage sicherlich mit einer breiten Palette von Möglichkeiten zu beantworten wäre, werden im Folgenden zwei grundsätzlich

unterschiedliche, jedoch unter Umständen komplementäre Wege herausgegriffen und näher besprochen: (1) der traditionelle („klassische“) Weg, welcher auf den theoretischen Ansätzen der Terminologiarbeit beruht; und (2) moderne Zugangsweisen, die sich heutzutage sehr stark mit der KI-gestützten bzw. KI-geprägten Arbeit assoziieren lassen¹.

3.1 Das traditionelle Verfahren

Wie bereits erwähnt, geht das traditionelle Verfahren der TD-Erstellung aus den theoretischen Grundsätzen der Terminologiarbeit hervor (vgl. auch Štefaňáková 2024). Diese ergeben eine relativ feste Reihenfolge der Arbeitsschritte, die sich in Punkten wie folgt zusammenfassen lassen:

- Erstellen des Begriffsapparates,
- Suche und Exzerption relevanter Termini und ihrer Definitionen in der Ausgangssprache (auf Deutsch) in ausgewählten Fachquellen,
- Suche nach zielsprachigen (slowakischen) Äquivalenten in Übersetzungswörterbüchern,
- Suche und Exzerption relevanter Termini und ihrer Definitionen in der Zielsprache (auf Slowakisch) in ausgewählten Fachquellen,
- Abgleich der Definitionen des Begriffs in der Ausgangssprache (im Deutschen) mit dem angenommenen äquivalenten Begriff der Zielsprache (im Slowakischen),
- Überprüfung der Bedeutung und Häufigkeit des Fachbegriffs in der Ausgangs- und in der Zielsprache (im Deutschen sowie im Slowakischen) anhand elektronischer Quellen,
- Abgleich der Bedeutung von Fachbegriffen in der Ausgangs- und in der Zielsprache (im Deutschen und Slowakischen),
- Suche und Dokumentation geeigneter Kontexte für einen bestimmten Fachbegriff aus authentischen Quellen in der Ausgangs- und in der Zielsprache (in Deutsch und Slowakisch),
- Besprechung mit Fachleuten,
- ggf. Aktualisierung der Angaben.

¹ Es soll hierbei angemerkt werden, dass die modernen Zugangsweisen viel umfangreicher sind und mit einer ganzen Bandbreite der technologischen Möglichkeiten der neuesten Zeit in Verbindung zu bringen sind (vgl. bspw. Kučič – Kaloh Vid (2025), bzw. die darin enthaltenen Fachartikel (Kalaš 2025; Štefčík 2025; Matijašec – Kučič – Seljan – Dunder (2025); Prodanović Stankić – Blaszkowska (2025) u. a.). Aus Platzgründen wird allerdings im vorliegenden Artikel darauf verzichtet, diese auszuführen und es wird sich lediglich auf die Verbindung mit der KI fokussiert.

Code und Kategorie / Kód a odbor	BIO/HAARW/Rotw
Terminus DE	Netzmagen
Morphosyntaktische Züge	Substantiv (m.)
Synonym	Haube, Retikulum
Definition	Netzmagen ist einer der 3 Vormägen der Wiederkäuer, dessen Schleimhautinnenauskleidung in der Aufsicht ein netzartiges Aussehen hat, er dient der Größenselektion der Futterpartikel.
Quelle (Def.)	Nach: Krebs, Herbert. 2024. <i>Vor und nach der Jägerprüfung</i> . Gesamtbearbeitung: Teppe, Christian et al. München: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag. S. 198.
Kontext	Von der Schleimhaut der Vormägen werden keine Verdauungssäfte abgesondert; sie ist jedoch mit Falten überzogen, die in der Haube netzartig angeordnet sind (daher auch die Bezeichnung „ Netzmagen “); sie dienen dem Bewegen und Zerkleinern der Futtermasse.
Quelle (Kont.)	Wagenknecht, Egon. 1988. <i>Rotwild</i> . Berlin: VEB Deutscher Landwirtschaftsverlag. S. 65 f.
Anmerkung	-
Termín SK	čepiec
Morfosyntaktické znaky	podstatné meno (m.)
Synonymum	reticulum
Definícia	Čepiec je časť zloženého žalúdka prežúvavcov – je objemovo väčší ako kniha – s nízkymi primárnymi lištami (1,5 mm) po okrajoch s bradavkami (1-2 mm).
Zdroj definície	Kropil, Rudolf – Sládek, Jozef – Garaj, Peter – Hell, Pavel. 2012. <i>Biológia poľovnej zveri (Srstnatá zver)</i> . Zvolen: TU vo Zvolene. S. 54.
Kontext	Do čepca prichádza natrávená potrava v polotekutom stave.
Zdroj kontextu	Rajský, Dušan et al. 2013. <i>Fyziológia a výživa zveri</i> . Zvolen: TU vo Zvolene LF. S. 71. ISBN 978-80-228-2516-0.
Poznámka	-

Abbildung 1: Beispiel für einen terminologischen Eintrag

Quelle: (Gašová, eigene Abbildung)

Das Ergebnis stellt die Summe terminologischer Einträge dar (Beispiel für einen terminologischen Eintrag vgl. Abbildung 1).

In einem terminologischen Eintrag sind verschiedene Informationen – Terminus, seine Synonyme, Definition, Definitionsquelle, Kontext und dessen Quellenangaben und ggf. Besonderheiten in der Anmerkung – zusammengefasst. Auf den ersten Blick ist zu sehen, dass die Information viel umfangreicher, vielschichtiger und komplexer ist als die in einem Übersetzungswörterbuch und als eine wichtige Wissensquelle für angehende Fachleute oder im Fall von zweisprachigen TD für Übersetzer und Dolmetscher dienen kann.

3.2 Moderne Zugangsweisen

Der moderne Weg lässt sich mit neuen technologischen Möglichkeiten – wie etwa KI – verbinden. Der Einsatz der KI assoziiert sich mit dem geringen Arbeitsaufwand, sowie mit einer schnellen und effizienten Arbeitsweise. Damit jedoch die Anwendung der KI sinnvoll umgesetzt werden kann, müssen einige Voraussetzungen erfüllt werden. Es ist notwendig, dass man (1) über die digitale Kompetenz verfügt, d. h. die Informations- und Kommunikationstechnik nutzen kann. Zugleich ist es wichtig, (2) eine bestimmte Wissensbasis bezüglich der KI aufzubauen. Dazu gehört z. B. effizientes Prompten. Inzwischen hat sich ein selbstständiger Fachbereich – *Prompt Engineering* – etabliert, welcher auf „*Techniken und Methoden, um die Eingabeaufforderungen für generative KI-Werkzeuge zu optimieren*“ (Breitenberg 2024, 1) ausgerichtet ist. Nicht zu vergessen sind (3) Fachkenntnisse, um die fertigen, von der KI generierten Outputs kritisch beurteilen und ggf. anpassen zu können.

Damit die „Zusammenarbeit“ mit der KI funktioniert, gilt als eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung, dass man die KI mit Daten versorgt. Warum dies als wichtig gilt, kann die inzwischen allgemein bekannt gewordene Assistenten-Metapher der KI verdeutlichen. Die KI wird als „Assistent“ betrachtet, den man trainieren und kontrollieren, bzw. der kritischen Betrachtung unterziehen muss. Dazu, vor allem zu dem Training, braucht man Daten, was folglich mit der Aufgabe – die Daten zu gewinnen – verbunden ist. Es klingt zwar einfach, aber diese Aufgabe kann sich unter Umständen als schwierig erweisen, v. a. (1) bei eng spezialisierten, nicht populären (kommerziell nicht attraktiven) Fachbereichen; sowie (2) bei wenig verbreiteten Sprachen (v. a. in Bezug auf die Translatologie). Bei der Beantwortung

der Frage, woher man die erforderlichen (soliden und qualitativ hochwertigen) Fachdaten gewinnt, gilt als eine mögliche (und sehr wahrscheinliche) Antwort das Stichwort saubere *Terminologiarbeit* bzw. *terminographische Arbeit*. Sie kann nämlich in den gegebenen o. e. Fällen als Voraussetzung für eine effektive Nutzung der KI betrachtet werden.

4 Die Erstellung einer TD aus der Perspektive der Nachhaltigkeit

Um auf das eingangs erwähnte Stichwort *Nachhaltigkeit* zurückzukommen, wird im Folgenden die TD-Erstellung in diesem Kontext angesprochen. Das Internet wimmelt von Beispielen und Angaben, wie teuer bzw. energieaufwendig die Nutzung der KI und das Training von LLMs ist. Angeblich verbraucht eine einzige KI-Anfrage so viel Energie, wie das 24minütige Aufladen eines Smartphones (vgl. Ilina – Hochwarth 2025). In der gleichen Quelle wird auch folgendes Beispiel angeführt: „Würden alle Menschen in Deutschland nur eine einzige Anfrage an ChatGPT stellen, läge der Gesamtverbrauch bei etwa 169 Megawattstunden. Damit könnten ungefähr 48 Haushalte ein ganzes Jahr mit Strom versorgt werden.“² Wenn man sich die Fragestellung des hohen Energieverbrauchs durch KI vor Augen führt, ist es wichtig, an die Voraussetzungen zu erinnern, die bereits erwähnt worden sind (vgl. Kap. 3.2). Wenn man über computertechnische Wissensbasis, entsprechende Fachkenntnisse, Material, Daten in der erforderlichen Qualität nicht verfügt, verschwendet man das Potenzial der Technologie und die Energie wird vergeudet. Bei der Nutzung der KI sollten deshalb auch Fragen in den Vordergrund rücken, wie (1) was es kostet, eine Aufgabe mithilfe der KI zu lösen; oder (2) ob es die jeweilige Aufgabe wert ist – auf Kosten eines unangemessen hohen Energieverbrauchs – um jeden Preis oder ggf. nur aus Spaß oder aus Lust am Experimentieren die KI anzuwenden. Auch aus diesem Grund ist es wichtig, die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der KI real einschätzen zu können und sich auch mit der Frage nach einer möglichen alternativen Lösung zu beschäftigen. Besonders wenn die Output-Qualität niedrig ist, kann es sein, dass die Evaluierung und Anpassung des Outputs unproportional viel Zeit und Energie in Anspruch nimmt.

² Die angeführten Beispiele können zwar bezüglich der Fragen diskutiert werden, was als Basis für die Berechnung der Angaben in den angeführten Beispielen diente, ob es sich um eine einfache, einzeilige Anfrage oder um einen umfangreichen Prompt handelte o. ä., was sich auf die Berechnungen grundsätzlich auswirken würde. Jedoch steht fest, dass die Verwendung der KI immer mehr Energie verbraucht, ob direkt oder indirekt, d. h. in Bezug auf das Training von KI-Modellen (vgl. auch Heyn – Allard 2025: 70 unter Anlehnung an Cho 2023 und Hao 2019).

Die Frage der Nacharbeitung verbindet sich nicht nur mit der o. e. energetischen Perspektive der Nachhaltigkeit, sondern hängt unmittelbar auch mit dem Aspekt der Fachmäßigkeit zusammen. Wenn keine qualitativ hohen Outputs generiert werden, ist es für die Erhaltung des entsprechenden qualitativen Niveaus die Fähigkeit einer fachkompetenten Bewertung und Modifikation unabdingbar. Man sollte vermeiden, dass wegen Bequemlichkeit ein „Sich-Verlassen-Auf-Phänomen“ entsteht und immer erneut an die Relevanz der kritischen Betrachtung der KI-Outputs erinnern. Ein weiteres Problem besteht in der Gefahr, dass Pseudo-Fachinformationen in Umlauf gesetzt werden. Wie auch Heinisch (2025: 127) unter Anlehnung an Li (2023) ausführt, „... können LLMs falsche Informationen, wie beispielsweise falsche Definitionen oder falsche Synonyme ausgeben, die bei unkritischer Weiterverwendung z. B. zu Missverständnissen oder der Fortführung von Stereotypen führen können“. Darüber hinaus können auf diese Art und Weise den LLMs falsche Trainingsdaten geliefert werden.³ Es kann besonders für die Fachgebiete gefährlich sein, für die es noch keine oder nur wenige Trainingsdaten gibt (vgl. auch Heinisch 2025: 126).

Nicht zu vergessen ist die ethische Perspektive. Im Kontext der KI-Nutzung (i. w. S.) sollte man sich u. A. auch folgende Fragen stellen: (1) Wo landen die Daten, die in ChatGPT eingegeben werden? (2) Inwieweit ist es bei der jeweiligen Fragestellung ethisch (und vernünftig), die KI mitwirken und mitentscheiden zu lassen? Außerdem sind die möglichen Auswirkungen auf die (zwischen)menschliche Kommunikationsfähigkeit sowie weitere Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten bzw. deren Abbau⁴ zu diskutieren. Da sich aber diese Fragen eher mit der KI-Nutzung im weiteren Kontext verbinden, werden sie an dieser Stelle nicht weiter ausgeführt.

5 Schlussfolgerungen

In dem vorliegenden Artikel wurden die Möglichkeiten der TD-Erstellung im Kontext der Nachhaltigkeit behandelt, wobei zwei mögliche, evtl. sich gegenseitig ergänzende Perspektiven herausgegriffen wurden. Anhand der bisherigen Erfahrungen aus dem dargestellten Projekt, das auf die Erstellung einer TD ausgerichtet ist, geht hervor, dass es sinnvoll ist, das traditionelle Verfahren mit den neuen, auf modernen Technologien beruhenden Strategien zu verbinden. Die KI ist

³ Buck (2025, 42) verweist in diesem Zusammenhang auf das *Prinzip garbage in, garbage out*, welches besagt: „Wer LLMs mit ‚Müll‘ füttert, bekommt auch ‚Müll‘ ausgegeben.“

⁴ Hierbei ist der Begriff *deskilling* zu erwähnen, bzw. der sog. deskilling-Effekt, den Buck (2025, 56) unter Anlehnung an Reinmann (2023, 4) als die „*Dequalifizierung mit Kompetenzverlust*“ betrachtet.

zu einem untrennbaren Bestandteil unseres Lebens geworden – ob wir es wollen oder nicht. Es ist kaum möglich, sich ihrer Wirkung zu entziehen, und es wäre auch unsinnig, es zu wollen. Im Gegenteil, die Anwendung der KI kann in mancher Hinsicht eine willkommene Hilfe werden. Es ist allerdings wichtig, sich vor Augen zu führen, dass bestimmte Voraussetzungen erfüllt werden müssen, damit die Kooperation KI – Mensch gut funktionieren kann, und die KI sollte – nicht zuletzt auch aus Nachhaltigkeitsgründen – überlegt verwendet werden. Der Mensch soll bewusst – also aufbauend auf bestimmten Kompetenzen und Kenntnissen – mit den Technologien umgehen. Man soll zuerst in der eigenen Vorbereitung auf die Nutzung der Technologien entsprechend viel Energie investieren und sich erst anschließend der gegebenen Möglichkeiten bedacht, verantwortlich und selbstbestimmt bedienen. Der Mensch und die Technologien sollen sich gegenseitig stützen, sodass (1) die Energiequellen nicht sinnlos verschwendet werden; (2) der menschliche Energieaufwand gespart wird und für weitere Tätigkeiten sinnvoll eingesetzt werden kann; (3) alles auf der ethischen Basis läuft, damit nach uns etwas Gutes und Wertvolles bleibt und damit es auch anhält. Solch eine Zugangsweise entspricht der Nachhaltigkeit – einem Prinzip, so wie dieses im Digitalen Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache definiert ist: „*Nachhaltigkeit: Prinzip, das auf die Gewährleistung von Bedürfnissen gegenwärtiger und künftiger Generationen ausgerichtet ist, besonders auf ökologisches Gleichgewicht, ferner soziale, wirtschaftliche Stabilität, Verträglichkeit o. A.*“ (<https://www.dwds.de/wb/Nachhaltigkeit>).

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INTERNATIONALE MIGRATION AUS DER PERSPEKTIVE DES NACHHALTIGKEITSKONZEPTS

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Internationale Migration ist ein bedeutendes soziales Phänomen, das sich auf den sozialen Zusammenhalt, die wirtschaftliche Stabilität und politische Entscheidungsprozesse auswirkt. Dieser Artikel konzentriert sich auf die Analyse von Migration im Kontext der Nachhaltigkeit und berücksichtigt dabei die Notwendigkeit langfristiger, ausgewogener Lösungen auf sozialer und wirtschaftlicher Ebene. Besonderes Augenmerk wird auf den Diskursrahmen gelegt, der durch Migration im öffentlichen Raum konstruiert wird, sowie auf dessen Einfluss auf die Gestaltung der öffentlichen Politik. Der Artikel wird zeigen, dass die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema internationale Migration entscheidend für die Nachhaltigkeit des Wirtschaftswachstums, die Stabilität des Arbeitsmarktes und die langfristige Tragfähigkeit der Sozialsysteme ist. Das Problem beim Diskurs über Migration ist jedoch, dass Politiker dazu neigen, Migration zur Polarisierung der Gesellschaft zu nutzen, um Wähler zu mobilisieren, anstatt sich auf die positiven Auswirkungen der Migration auf die Nachhaltigkeit verschiedener wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Systeme im Aufnahmeland zu konzentrieren. Die Slowakei ist ein Paradebeispiel für ein Land, das über unzureichende Einwanderungs- und Integrationspolitiken verfügt und stattdessen Politiker hat, die Migration als Bedrohung darstellen.

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INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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International migration is a significant social phenomenon that affects social cohesion, economic stability, and political decision-making processes. This article analyzes migration in the context of sustainability, considering the need for long-term, balanced solutions at the social and economic levels. Particular attention is paid to the discourse framework constructed by migration in the public sphere and its influence on the shaping of public policy. The article will show that addressing international migration is crucial for the sustainability of economic growth, the stability of the labor market, and the long-term viability of social systems. However, the problem with the discourse on migration is that politicians tend to use migration to polarize society and mobilize voters, rather than focusing on the positive effects of migration on the sustainability of various economic and social systems in the host country. Slovakia is a prime example of a country that has inadequate immigration and integration policies and instead has politicians who portray migration as a threat.



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1 Einleitung

Die internationale Migration ist in den letzten Jahren in den Mittelpunkt des politischen Diskurses in den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas gerückt (Androvičová, 2017). Während klassische Einwanderungsländer sich bereits seit mehreren Jahrzehnten mit Einwanderungs- und Integrationspolitik befassen müssen (Liďák, 2016; Hayes, Dudek, 2019), handelt es sich in den Ländern Mittel- und Osteuropas um ein relativ neues Thema der öffentlichen Politik. Vor 1989 war diese Region aus politischen, ökonomischen und sozialen Gründen eher durch Auswanderung als durch Einwanderung gekennzeichnet (Štefančík, Nemcová, 2015). Seit dem Beitritt der postkommunistischen Staaten zur Europäischen Union haben sich die Migrationsprozesse in diesen Ländern umgekehrt, und die Zahl der Einwanderer ist höher als die der Auswanderer (Letavajová, Divinský, 2019). Vor diesem Hintergrund gewannen die Fragen nach den politischen, wirtschaftlichen, demographischen und sozialen Auswirkungen der Migration an Relevanz. Anstelle einer sachlichen Diskussion wird das Thema Migration eher zur Mobilisierung der Wähler instrumentalisiert. Im Mittelpunkt des Migrationsdiskurses steht nicht die Frage, wie durch die Migration positive Effekte für das Zielland erzielt werden können, sondern im Gegenteil, wie die Migration gestoppt werden kann. In politischen Diskursen tauchen daher Fragen auf, wie man die Grenzen schützen, die Zahl der Migranten reduzieren und Migranten in ihre Herkunftsländer zurückschicken kann (Spálová, Mikuláš, 2022). Das Problem, und darauf basieren meine Überlegungen, ist, dass Migration nicht gestoppt werden kann, dass es sich nur um einen einfachen Wahlkampfeslogan der Populisten handelt. In Wirklichkeit ist es noch keinem Land gelungen, die Einwanderungsprozesse vollständig zu stoppen. Staaten mit entwickelten Volkswirtschaften. Im Gegensatz dazu analysieren proaktiv agierende Staaten, welche Migrantengruppen zur Verbesserung des Lebensstandards, des Wachstums des BIP, der Sicherung der Stabilität des Rentensystems oder die Lösung des demographischen Defizits einen Beitrag leisten könnten. Mit anderen Worten: Wie kann durch Migration die Nachhaltigkeit des sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Systems erreicht werden?

Das Ziel dieses Beitrags ist es, den Zusammenhang zwischen internationaler Migration und Nachhaltigkeit zu erläutern und die Ergebnisse einer Analyse des slowakischen Migrationsdiskurses mit Schwerpunkt auf den positiven Aspekten der Migration vorzustellen. Die positiven Auswirkungen einer gesteuerten Migration auf die Zielländer sind vielfältig, doch in der öffentlichen Debatte werden eher die

negativen Aspekte hervorgehoben (Letavajová, 2021). Besonders negativ äußern sich slowakische Politiker gegenüber Muslimen (Kosárová, 2023), die in der Slowakei vom Staat nicht als eigenständige und unabhängige Religionsgemeinschaft anerkannt werden. Die Slowakische Republik ist gerade ein Land, in dem Defizite in den Bereichen nachhaltiges Wirtschaftswachstum, Demographie, aber auch in Fragen der Nachhaltigkeit des Sozialsystems, insbesondere der Rentenversicherung, bestehen. Dieser Text erklärt, wie slowakische Politiker das Thema der Migration wahrnehmen, insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit den genannten Problemen der Wirtschaft, der Demographie und des Sozialsystems. Die Hauptmethode zur Darstellung der Zusammenhänge zwischen Migration und der Haltung slowakischer Politiker zur Erreichung von Nachhaltigkeit wird die Diskursanalyse sein.

2 Das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit und Migration

Obwohl Migration oft negativ diskutiert wird, hat sie viele positive Auswirkungen, insbesondere auf die Bereiche, die die tragenden Säulen des Konzepts der Nachhaltigkeit bilden – Wirtschaft, Sozialsystem und Umwelt. Das Problem des Konzepts der Nachhaltigkeit in Bezug auf Migration besteht jedoch darin, aus welcher Perspektive wir die Vorteile der Migration betrachten. Migration hat nämlich positive Auswirkungen auf das Wirtschaftswachstum und die Stabilität des Arbeitsmarktes in den Zielländern. In den Herkunftsländern der Migranten kann es jedoch umgekehrt sein, also die negativen Auswirkungen können dominieren. Wenn das Zielland junge, gut ausgebildete und qualifizierte Arbeitskräfte anzieht, ist das natürlich ein Instrument der Nachhaltigkeit. Auf der anderen Seite verliert das Herkunftsland jedoch diese Arbeitskräfte. Für das Herkunftsland kann es von Vorteil sein, wenn im Ausland arbeitende Personen einen Teil ihres Einkommens in ihr Herkunftsland überweisen, um den Lebensstandard eines Teils der Bevölkerung zu verbessern. In größerem Umfang kann dies sogar zum Wachstum des Bruttoinlandsprodukts beitragen (Heilmann, 2006).

Im Zusammenhang mit der wirtschaftlichen Nachhaltigkeit durch die Migration wäre es angebracht, auch die ethische Dimension dieses Problems zu beleuchten (Røpke, 2006). Arbeitgeber sind daran interessiert, billige Arbeitskräfte aus dem Ausland zu beschäftigen (), wobei sie selten die Interessen des Herkunftslandes berücksichtigen. Dabei müssen wir nicht nur an Niedriglohnempfänger denken, sondern auch an qualifizierte Arbeitnehmer, die sehr gefragt sind, wie beispielsweise Krankenschwestern oder Ärzte. Die Slowakei ist auch Beispiel für ein Land, aus dem

viele junge Menschen wegziehen, um an ausländischen Universitäten u. a. Medizin zu studieren, wobei sich nur ein kleiner Teil der Studierenden dafür entscheidet, als Ärzte in der Slowakei zu arbeiten. Aus der Sicht der Nachhaltigkeit des Gesundheitssystems gibt es noch eine schlimmere Alternative, nämlich wenn sich ein Absolvent der Medizin an einer slowakischen Universität entscheidet, Slowakei zu verlassen und im Ausland zu arbeiten. Da das Hochschulstudium in der Slowakei kostenlos ist, investiert der Staat sechs Jahre lang in einen jungen Menschen, wobei das Medizinstudium für den Staat unter allen Fachrichtungen eines der teuersten ist, und der Medizinabsolvent entscheidet sich schließlich, die Slowakei zu verlassen. Aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht ist dies für den Staat ein reiner finanzieller Verlust. Wenn wir also die nachhaltige Entwicklung als „eine Entwicklung, die den Bedürfnissen der Gegenwart gerecht wird, ohne die Fähigkeit künftiger Generationen zu beeinträchtigen, ihre eigenen Bedürfnisse zu befriedigen“ (Generalversammlung der Vereinten Nationen 1987) definieren, sollten wir auch an andere Staaten denken.

Neben der wirtschaftlichen Dimension wird häufig auch die soziale Dimension der Migration diskutiert (Čiefová, 2020; Seresová, 2022). Die soziale Dimension bezieht sich auf die Integration von Migranten in die Gesellschaft. Wenn Migranten Zugang zu Bildung, Beschäftigung und sozialen Dienstleistungen erhalten, fördert dies die soziale Vielfalt, den kulturellen Austausch und das demographische Gleichgewicht in den Zielländern. Umgekehrt kann eine fehlerhafte Integration zu sozialen Spannungen, Diskriminierung und Segregation führen und damit die soziale Nachhaltigkeit gefährden.

Schließlich wirkt sich Migration aus ökologischer Sicht auf den Ressourcenverbrauch, den Verkehr und die Urbanisierung aus, insbesondere wenn sie sich auf große Städte konzentriert. Eine nachhaltige Migrationsplanung, die den Bedarf an Infrastruktur, Wohnraum und Energie berücksichtigt, kann die Umweltbelastung minimieren und das Gleichgewicht zwischen Bevölkerungswachstum und verfügbaren natürlichen Ressourcen fördern.

Insgesamt lässt sich feststellen, dass internationale Migration ein wichtiges Instrument für nachhaltige Entwicklung ist, wenn sie eine effektive wirtschaftliche Integration von Migranten fördert, soziale Inklusion und Gleichheit gewährleistet und gleichzeitig die Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt minimiert. Eine gut funktionierende Integration von Migranten gilt gleichzeitig als geeigneter Schutz vor Fremdenfeindlichkeit (Triandafyllidou, Yeoh, 2023).

3 Migration und der slowakische Diskurs

Der vorliegende Text stellt die Vorteile der Migration für die Zielländer dar. Wenn Migration ein geeignetes Instrument für die Nachhaltigkeit des wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Systems sowie für einen besseren Umweltschutz sein kann, wäre zu erwarten, dass die Staaten die Migration unterstützen würden. Ein Blick auf den slowakischen Diskurs (und nicht nur den slowakischen) zeigt jedoch, dass Politiker Migration nicht als Chance für das Land, sondern eher als Belastung oder Bedrohung auffassen (Androvičová, 2015, Štefančík, Kiner, 2021; Bozogánová, Kentoš, Piterová, 2022). Psychologische Untersuchungen zeigen, dass politische Botschaften, die Ängste und Befürchtungen hervorrufen, wirksamer sind als positive Botschaften (Tannenbaum et al., 2015). Gerade das Schüren von Angst vor Migranten ist zu einem wirksamen Instrument der Populisten in ganz Europa geworden (Demirkol, 2022). Populistische Politiker stellen Migranten als persönliche, wirtschaftliche, kulturelle und letztlich auch politische Bedrohung dar (Demirkol, 2022; Štefančík et al., 2023). Auf persönlicher Ebene werden Migranten von Populisten als potenzielle Terroristen oder als Überträger exotischer Krankheiten dargestellt. Populisten sehen Migranten auch als wirtschaftliche Bedrohung, da sie sie als Konkurrenz auf dem Arbeitsmarkt betrachten. Die kulturelle Bedrohung besteht Meinung nach darin, dass die Kulturen und Religionen der Migranten mit den Grundsätzen des Christentums nicht vereinbar sind. Die politische Bedrohung schließlich basiert auf der Vorstellung, dass die Nationalstaaten aufgrund der Migrationspolitik der Europäischen Union (z. B. des sogenannten Quotensystems zur Verteilung von Migranten unter den Mitgliedstaaten) ihre Souveränität verlieren.

Das Problem des slowakischen Migrationsdiskurses besteht darin, dass das Narrativ – Migranten sind eine Bedrohung – nicht nur von radikalen Populisten und Extremisten verbreitet wird, sondern dass ähnliche Ansichten auch von einigen Politikern der sogenannten demokratischen Mitte vertreten werden (Liďák, Štefančík, 2022). In den Medien erscheinen häufig Berichte über Straftaten von Migranten und, wenn kein Beispiel aus der Slowakei verfügbar ist, werden Beispiele aus Westeuropa übernommen. Eine solche Darstellung der Migrationsprozesse kann sich dann negativ auf die Bildung der öffentlichen Meinung auswirken.

Ein weiterer Mangel des slowakischen Migrationsdiskurses besteht im Fehlen eines Konzepts zur Integration von Migranten (Štefančík, 2022). Politiker präsentieren Ideen, wie sie die Migration stoppen, eine bessere Grenzkontrolle sicherstellen und Ungarn beim Schutz der Außengrenzen des Schengen-Raums unterstützen wollen. Es wird jedoch nie darüber diskutiert, wie Migranten, die eine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung in der Slowakei erhalten haben, in die slowakische Gesellschaft integriert werden sollen. Dabei ist eine gut funktionierende Integrationspolitik genauso wichtig wie eine gut gesteuerte Einwanderungspolitik. Die Slowakei befindet sich in der Diskussion über die Integration von Migranten hinter anderen EU-Staaten, was sich in Zukunft als Fehler erweisen könnte.

4 Der Migrationsdiskurs aus Sicht des Nachhaltigkeitskonzepts

In der Fachliteratur findet eine Diskussion darüber statt, wie Populisten ihre Ansichten zu Migranten präsentieren, wenn sie aus der Opposition in die Regierung kommen, Regierungsverantwortung übernehmen und bestehende Probleme lösen müssen (Askim, Karlsen, Kolltveit, 2022; Luo, 2024). In der Slowakei haben die Populisten zwischen 2020 und 2023 die Regierungsmitglieder besonders intensiv dafür kritisiert, dass sie nicht in der Lage waren, die Grenzen zu schützen, um die Migrationsroute durch die Slowakei zu verhindern. Nach den Parlamentswahlen 2023 gewannen sie jedoch die Wahlen, bildeten eine Koalitionsregierung und standen unter anderem vor dem Problem des Arbeitskräftemangels auf dem slowakischen Arbeitsmarkt. Gerade durch die Analyse des Migrationsdiskurses lassen sich Veränderungen in der Stellungnahme auch der slowakischen Politiker zur internationalen Migration beobachten. Sie sind sich dessen bewusst, dass zur Sicherung einer nachhaltigen wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung auch (billige) Arbeitskräfte aus Ausland notwendig sind. In der Sprache der Populisten lässt sich diese Veränderung an der Art und Weise erkennen, wie sie die Migranten bezeichnen. Bis 2023 wurden Migranten in der Regel mit einem einzigen Wort bezeichnet – „Migranten“. Diese Bezeichnung berücksichtigte jedoch nicht die innere Struktur der Migrationsprozesse. Dadurch wurde die Einteilung der Migranten in Kategorien nicht berücksichtigt. Selbst Politiker vermieden die Verwendung der Bezeichnung „*Flüchtling*“ und bevorzugten die Bezeichnung „*Wirtschaftsmigrant*“. Mit dieser Wortwahl leugneten sie alle anderen Gründe außer dem wirtschaftlichen, aus denen Migranten gezwungen waren, ihr Herkunftsland zu verlassen. Die Bezeichnung „*Wirtschaftsmigrant*“ erhielt im slowakischen politischen Diskurs so eine negative Konnotation.

Die Meinungsänderung der Populisten in Bezug auf die Migranten erfolgte unmittelbar nach der Übernahme der Regierungsverantwortung im Herbst 2023. Seit dieser Zeit besteht das Interesse daran, Migranten in zwei Gruppen zu kategorisieren: „legale“ und „illegale“ Migranten. Das Adjektiv „legal“ wird von Populisten verwendet, um die Unterstützung der Öffentlichkeit für die Politik der Beschäftigung von Migranten auf dem slowakischen Arbeitsmarkt zu gewinnen. Der Ministerpräsident sagt, dass „legale Migranten“ der slowakischen Wirtschaft helfen könnten. Auch slowakische Politiker sind sich bewusst, dass durch die Migration ein nachhaltiges Wirtschaftswachstum erreicht werden kann. Der slowakische Ministerpräsident spricht nicht nur über diese Möglichkeit, sondern unternimmt auch konkrete Schritte: Besuche in Ländern mit einem Überschuss an Arbeitskräften, um auf dem slowakischen Arbeitsmarkt eine höhere Beschäftigungsquote unter Migranten zu erreichen.

„Ukrainer sind für uns willkommene Arbeitskräfte... Ukrainer, die daran interessiert sind, hier zu bleiben, sind bei uns willkommen, da sie sprachlich nahestehen und oft über eine sehr gute Ausbildung verfügen“ (Robert Fico, nach Pekárková, 2024).

„Wir bereiten eine ganze Reihe von Gesetzen, institutionellen und finanziellen Instrumenten vor, die dazu beitragen sollen, die Vermittlung von Menschen aus dem Ausland – wohlgemerkt legalen Migranten – in der Slowakischen Republik zu beschleunigen“ (Robert Fico, nach Pekárková, 2024).

„Wir sprechen vor allem von Menschen, die wir in der Industrie brauchen, insbesondere in Unternehmen, die Teil der Automobilindustrie sind. Aber wir sprechen auch von Berufen wie Krankenschwester. In Usbekistan wurde bereits gemeinsam mit Deutschland ein Modell entwickelt, in dem bestimmte Berufe direkt auf dem Gebiet Usbekistans vorbereitet werden. Das ist unser Ziel“ (Robert Fico, in Dnes 24, 2025).

Der slowakische Ministerpräsident Fico betonte 2024 und 2025 in einem ganz anderen Ton (anders als zu seiner Zeit in der Opposition) die Notwendigkeit der legalen Migration als Instrument zur Lösung des Arbeitskräftemangels, wobei er sich insbesondere auf Ukrainer konzentrierte. Sie bilden derzeit die größte Migrantengruppe in der Slowakei. Robert Fico suchte auch in Usbekistan und anderen asiatischen Staaten, die er als Ministerpräsident besucht hat, neue Arbeitskräfte. Im Kontext der wirtschaftlichen Nachhaltigkeit spiegeln seine Äußerungen das Bestreben wider, die Kontinuität und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der slowakischen Industrie zu sichern, insbesondere des Automobilssektors, der in der Slowakei der Hauptpfeiler der Volkswirtschaft ist, aber auch des Gesundheitswesens, in dem ein offensichtlicher Arbeitskräftemangel (Krankenschwestern und Ärzte) besteht. Die Ausbildung von Arbeitskräften direkt

in Usbekistan deutet auf einen Ansatz zur Gewinnung qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte hin, der sowohl zur Stabilität des Arbeitsmarktes als auch zur Entlastung der heimischen Bildungskapazitäten beitragen kann.

Unter dem Gesichtspunkt der sozialen Nachhaltigkeit hebt Fico die sprachliche und kulturelle Nähe der Ukrainer hervor und weist damit auf das Potenzial für eine schnellere Integration in die Gesellschaft hin. Gleichzeitig kann seine Betonung der „Legalität“ der Migration und die Unterscheidung zwischen legalen und illegalen Migranten die öffentliche Debatte polarisieren und Hindernisse für einen integrativen Ansatz schaffen. Im Falle der Usbeken handelt es sich um ein pragmatisches Modell, das die mit illegaler Migration verbundenen Risiken verringern kann, aber gleichzeitig Fragen hinsichtlich der Bereitschaft der slowakischen Institutionen für kulturelle und religiöse Vielfalt aufwirft, da Usbekistan ein überwiegend muslimisches Land ist.

Der Umweltaspekt der Nachhaltigkeit fehlt in Ficos Äußerungen. Die Migration als Instrument der Entwicklung sollte auch im Hinblick auf ihre Auswirkungen auf Infrastruktur, Wohnen, Verkehr und Ressourcenverbrauch betrachtet werden. In dieser Hinsicht fehlt ein Hinweis darauf, wie die Slowakei die ökologischen Herausforderungen, die mit dem Bevölkerungswachstum infolge der Migration verbunden sind, bewältigen will und wird.

5 Diskussion

Wie bereits erwähnt, kann Migration nicht nur positive Auswirkungen auf die wirtschaftliche, sondern auch auf die soziale und ökologische Nachhaltigkeit haben. Aus wirtschaftlicher Perspektive geht es vor allem darum, die Bedürfnisse des Arbeitsmarktes zu befriedigen. Die Wirtschaftsmigranten sind bereit, auch solche Tätigkeiten auszuüben, für die es seitens der einheimischen Bevölkerung keine Nachfrage gibt (Letavajová, Divinský, 2019). Neben ihrer rein wirtschaftlichen Bedeutung haben Wirtschaftsmigranten auch positive Auswirkungen auf das Rentensystem (Alves et al., 2019). Die europäischen Rentensysteme basieren auf der Annahme, dass die Sozialabgaben der erwerbstätigen Bevölkerung im produktiven Alter die Sozialhilfe für Senioren finanzieren kann. Komplikationen treten auf, wenn die Zahl der Neugeborenen geringer ist als für die natürliche Reproduktion der Gesellschaft erforderlich ist. Einige Staaten lösen dieses Problem durch eine

durchdachte Einwanderungspolitik; in der Slowakei wird jedoch die fachliche Debatte über deren Gestaltung vernachlässigt.

Durch den Zusammenhang zwischen Migration und Nachhaltigkeit entsteht jedoch noch ein anderes Problem. Wenn wir von Nachhaltigkeit sprechen, meinen wir in der Regel das Zielland der Migration. Für das Herkunftsland kann die Auswanderung der eigenen Bevölkerung jedoch mehr negative als positive Auswirkungen haben. Die Migration kann sich bei hoher Arbeitslosigkeit positiv auf das Herkunftsland auswirken. Durch die Auswanderung eines Teils der Bevölkerung kann sich das Verhältnis zwischen Angebot und Nachfrage auf dem Arbeitsmarkt stabilisieren. Eine geringere Zahl von Arbeitslosen bedeutet zugleich einen geringeren Bedarf an staatlichen Sozialleistungen.

Das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit basiert auf der Annahme, dass das wirtschaftliche und soziale System für beide Kategorien von Staaten, sowohl für die Zielländer als auch für die Herkunftsländer der Migranten, vorteilhaft sei. Positive Auswirkungen der Auswanderung lassen sich im Herkunftsland beobachten, wenn durch die Auswanderung eine niedrigere Arbeitslosenquote und damit eine geringere Belastung des Sozialversicherungssystems erreicht wird. Ebenso positiv ist es, wenn die Überweisungen das Gesamt-BIP des Herkunftslandes erhöhen (Triandafyllidou, Yeoh, 2023). Allerdings kann die Auswanderung für das Herkunftsland mehr negative als positive Auswirkungen haben. Die bereits erwähnten Überweisungen haben auch ihre Schattenseiten. Obwohl sie zum Einkommen der Haushalte beitragen, können sie eine Abhängigkeit von Geldern aus dem Ausland schaffen, was zu einer Stagnation der lokalen Wirtschaft führen kann, da sich ein Teil der Bevölkerung auf Überweisungen statt auf die heimische Produktivität verlässt. Eine negative Folge ist der Braindrain, also die Abwanderung hochqualifizierter Arbeitskräfte. Einige Regionen im Herkunftsland können von einem erheblichen Bevölkerungsrückgang betroffen sein, was ihre sozioökonomische Entwicklung negativ beeinflusst. Der Wegzug qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte schwächt die Produktivität und das Innovationspotenzial der heimischen Wirtschaft. Langfristig hat der Wegzug dieser Art von Arbeitskräften negative Auswirkungen auf die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Landes und auf die Modernisierungsprozesse. Der Mangel an Arbeitskräften im Gesundheitswesen, im Bildungswesen oder im Baugewerbe kann die Qualität der Dienstleistungen verschlechtern und den Druck auf die verbleibende Bevölkerung erhöhen, während es im Agrarsektor zu einem Rückgang der lokalen Produktion kommen kann.

So wie wir negative Auswirkungen der Migration auf die Herkunftsländer im wirtschaftlichen Bereich feststellen, identifizieren wir ebenso negative Auswirkungen im sozialen Bereich. Die langfristige Trennung von Familienmitgliedern ist bei der Aufrechterhaltung des Familienzusammenhalts nicht förderlich. Die Abwanderung junger und aktiver Menschen führt zu einem demographischen Defizit, das die Nachhaltigkeit der Sozialleistungen und des Rentensystems gefährdet. Wenn einige Haushalte durch Überweisungen von im Ausland lebenden Familienangehörigen unterstützt werden und andere auf ihre eigenen, im Herkunftsland erworbenen Ressourcen angewiesen sind, kann eine neue Form der sozialen Polarisierung entstehen. Der langfristige Aufenthalt von Emigranten im Ausland führt zum Import neuer Werte und Lebensstile, was bereichernd sein kann, aber auch zu kulturellen Spannungen nach der Rückkehr führen kann.

Die oben beschriebenen Auswirkungen der Emigration auf das Herkunftsland führen zu der Frage, ob Migration mit dem Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit vereinbar ist. Wenn Migration positive Auswirkungen auf die Wirtschaft, das Sozial- und Rentensystem, die demographische Entwicklung oder die Nachhaltigkeit des Bildungssystems in den Zielländern hat, können wir in den Herkunftsländern genau die gegenteiligen Auswirkungen feststellen. Durch Migration können wir also die Nachhaltigkeit fördern, aber in der Regel gilt dies für die Zielländer der Migration, nicht für die Herkunftsländer

6 Fazit

Aus den Ausführungen in diesem Beitrag geht hervor, dass die Beziehung zwischen Migration und Nachhaltigkeit ambivalent ist und vor allem davon abhängt, aus welcher Perspektive wir sie betrachten. Im Falle des Ziellandes der Migration finden wir eine Reihe von Argumenten, die die Ansicht stützen, dass Migration die Nachhaltigkeit fördert. Das Gegenteil muss jedoch nicht unbedingt zutreffen. Es muss nicht unbedingt so sein, dass das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit in den Herkunftsländern nicht funktioniert. Die Abwanderung bestimmter sozioökonomischer Segmente kann jedoch die Umsetzung erheblich erschweren. Der Weggang junger, gebildeter und qualifizierter Menschen kann zu einem ungünstigen demographischen Trend führen, sodass es zu einer Überalterung der Bevölkerung, zur Gefährdung, der Reproduktion der Arbeitskräfte und der Sicherstellung der sozialen Dienstleistungen kommt, wodurch die soziale

Nachhaltigkeit beeinträchtigt wird. Der Verlust qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte („Brain-Drain“) verringert das Innovationspotenzial und die Produktivität, während die Abhängigkeit von Überweisungen aus den Zielländern trotz kurzfristiger Stabilisierung der Einkommen der Haushalte, langfristig jedoch die Investitionen in die lokale Wirtschaft, Infrastruktur und lokale Unternehmen schwächt, wodurch die wirtschaftliche Nachhaltigkeit des Herkunftslandes gefährdet wird. Die Abwanderung erschwert die ökologische Nachhaltigkeit, da die geringere Zahl qualifizierter Fachkräfte die Fähigkeit des Landes zur Umsetzung von Projekten im Bereich der erneuerbaren Energien und der Anpassung an den Klimawandel verringert. In politischer und institutioneller Hinsicht kann die Abwanderung zu einer Schwächung der Bürgerbeteiligung und der Stabilität der Institutionen führen.

In Bezug auf das Zielland der Migration weist das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit eine besondere Dimension auf, da die Ankunft von Migranten das demografische, wirtschaftliche, soziale und ökologische Gleichgewicht der Aufnahmegesellschaft beeinflusst. Migration kann zur demografischen Nachhaltigkeit beitragen, indem sie die Arbeitskräfte ergänzt, insbesondere in Ländern mit niedriger Geburtenrate und alternder Bevölkerung, wodurch die Stabilität der Renten- und Sozialsysteme gefördert wird. Aus wirtschaftlicher Sicht füllen Migranten oft Lücken auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, steigern die Produktivität und bringen neue Fähigkeiten mit, was die wirtschaftliche Nachhaltigkeit fördern kann, aber gleichzeitig Druck auf die Infrastruktur, den Wohnungsmarkt und die öffentlichen Dienstleistungen ausübt. Die soziale Nachhaltigkeit wird durch die Fähigkeit des Ziellandes, Migranten zu integrieren, Chancengleichheit zu gewährleisten und Segregation sowie soziale Spannungen zu verhindern, beeinflusst. Hier zeigt sich jedoch in mehreren Staaten ein Problem: Migranten aus bestimmten Staaten, Regionen oder Religionen können sich nicht in die Gesellschaft des Ziellandes integrieren. Aus diesem Grund wird der Integration derzeit besondere Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt, obwohl dieses Thema gerade in der Slowakei marginalisiert wird, da der politische Diskurs von populistischen Parteien geprägt ist, die vor allem den Sicherheitsaspekt der Migration hervorheben. Populisten stellen Migration nicht als Chance für verschiedene Bereiche, sondern als Bedrohung dar (Spišiaková, Keresty, 2024). Auch im Falle des Ziellandes lassen sich einige negative Auswirkungen auf das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit feststellen. Dies betrifft beispielsweise die Umweltdimension. Dies ist mit einem Anstieg des Ressourcenverbrauchs und einer Belastung der lokalen Infrastruktur verbunden, was eine nachhaltige Stadtplanung und eine effiziente Energienutzung erfordert.

Insgesamt kann ich feststellen, dass das Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit in den Zielländern von der Fähigkeit der Gesellschaft und der Institutionen abhängt, Migrationsströme so zu bewältigen, dass die Ankunft von Migranten die Entwicklung und Stabilität fördert, anstatt die ökologischen oder sozialen Risiken zu erhöhen. Ein Hindernis können Populisten sein, die durch die Betonung der Migration als Bedrohung für die einheimische Bevölkerung Ängste schüren, die als wichtiger Faktor für die Mobilisierung der Wähler angesehen werden. Wenn wir also über den Zusammenhang zwischen Migration und dem Konzept der Nachhaltigkeit sprechen, sollten wir auch den politischen Diskurs berücksichtigen, da dessen Charakter genau der Faktor sein kann, der entscheidet, ob Migration zur Nachhaltigkeit beiträgt oder nicht.

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Povzetek v slovenskem jeziku

Transkulturalna komunikacija, zdravje in trajnostni razvoj

Pričujoča znanstvena monografija je zasnovana interdisciplinarno in se posveča medkulturni komunikaciji na področju zdravega načina življenja, trajnostnega razvoja in zelenega prehoda v univerzitetnem in globalnem okolju. Medkulturna komunikacija postaja zanimivo raziskovalno področje prevodoslovja, saj povezuje več znanstvenih disciplin in opozarja na pomen medsebojnega razumevanja in spoštljive ter konstruktivne komunikacije na različnih znanstvenih področjih. Monografija nudi nabor prispevkov v angleškem in nemškem jeziku, namenjenih pomenu in vlogi večjezičnega in terminološko zahtevnega sporazumevanja v sodobni in trajnostno naravnani družbi. V ospredju razprav so izsledki raziskav in ugotovitev mednarodne projektne skupine EDU-FIT. Gre za zdrav način življenja študentov v večkulturnem in večjezičnem univerzitetnem okolju, upoštevajoč ustrezno komunikacijo ter terminologijo, povezano s prekomerno težo, ki je pogosto posledica spremembe načina prehrane in življenjskega sloga ob prihodu mladostnikov na študij. V znanstvenih razpravah domačih in tujih prevodoslovcev ter jezikoslovcev so predstavljeni in analizirani različni teoretični in praktični vidiki komuniciranja v luči izjemne dinamike sodobnega medkulturnega povezovanja in prenosa informacij. Monografija je aktualna in izvirna, saj naslavlja vprašanja medkulture komunikacije v luči terminoloških izzivov in razvoja sodobne trajnostne družbe. Gre za doprinos k razvoju stroke na področjih jezikoslovja, transkulture

komunikacije, literarnih ved ter trajnostnega turizma, ki se odraža predvsem v večplastnem pristopu in v široki obravnavi različnih izzivov na področju sodobne transkulturne komunikacije.

TRANSCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

NATALIA KALOH VID, VLASTA KUČIŠ (EDS.)

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The scientific interdisciplinary monograph is dedicated to intercultural communication in the field of healthy lifestyle, sustainable development and green transition in the university and global environment. Intercultural communication has recently become an interesting research area in translation studies, as it connects several scientific disciplines and draws attention to the importance of mutual understanding and respectful and constructive communication in various scientific fields. The monograph offers contributions in English and German dedicated to the meaning and role of multilingual and terminologically challenging communication in a contemporary and sustainably oriented society. The discussions focus on the results of research and findings of the international project EDU-FIT which focused on developing healthy lifestyle habits among students in a multicultural and multilingual university environment, taking into account sensitive communication and terminology related to overweight, which is often a consequence of changes in diet and lifestyle when adolescents enter high education programs. Scientific researches by Slovene and foreign translation scholars and linguists focus on various theoretical and practical aspects of communication in the light of extraordinary dynamics of contemporary intercultural connections and information transfer.

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Monografija je izrazito interdisciplinarna in se posveča medkulturni komunikaciji za promocijo zdravega življenja, trajnostnega razvoja in zelenega prehoda na lokalni, regijski in mednarodni ravni. Interdisciplinarna je tudi sestava avtorjev člankov, saj so med njimi politologi, germanisti, anglisti, jezikoslovci, prevajalci različnih jezikov, sociolingvisti, lektorji za različne jezike, menedžerji v turizmu, komunikologi, dietetiki, diabetologi in informatiki. Širina nabora strokovnjakov nakazuje tudi širino vsebin, ki se v večini prispevkov nanašajo na izsledke raziskav in ugotovitev mednarodne projektne skupine EDU-FIT.

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Skozi prispevke se odraža zavedanje o pomenu prepoznavanja in dopuščanja različnosti kultur in hkrati gradnji mostov med njimi: prav sobivanje kultur in spoštovanje drugačnosti sta dve ključni sporočili pričujočega dela. Ugotovitve, predstavljene v prispevkih, so izvirne in v veliki meri temeljijo na izsledkih raziskav, ki so nastale v okviru projektne skupine EDU-FIT, katere cilj je osvestiti študente v večkulturnem in večjezičnem univerzitetnem okolju o pomembnosti zdravega načina življenja in ustrezne komunikacije na tem področju. Monografija prinaša nova spoznanja o vlogi jezika in komunikacije pri doseganju zdravstvenih in trajnostnih ciljev. Z vključevanjem trajnostne komponente razvija obstoječe področje prevajanja/tolmačenja za potrebe zdravstva, in odpira nove poglede na to nadvse aktualno področje, ki se zelo hitro razvija

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